THE

CABINET OF HISTORY.

CONDUCTED BY THE

REV. DIONYSIUS LARDNER, LL.D. F.R.S. L. & E.

M.R.I.A. F.R.A.S. F.L.S. F.Z.S. Hon F.C.P.S. &c &c.

ASSISTED BY

EMINENT LITERARY MEN.

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VOL. II.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

The great importance of the modern history of Russia, and the vast accession of information that has been obtained from sources but recently developed, have led to the extension of this History to three instead of two Volumes, as had been originally intended. The present Volume closes with the reign of Catharine II.; and the next will be occupied by the events that have given to Russia, since that period, so extraordinary an influence in the affairs of Europe.

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HISTORY OF RUSSIA.

CHAPTER I.

RUSSIA DEVELOPES A TENDENCY TO BECOME EUROPEAN. — RETROSPECT OF THE CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE, IN REFERENCE TO THE USEFUL ARTS, TO WAR, COMMERCE AND SOCIAL USAGES. — THE CHARACTER OF PETER ADMIRABLY ADAPTED TO THE TIMES. — HE ESTABLISHES A STANDING ARMY, AND FORMS A NAVAL ARMAMENT. — HE CONTEMPLATES A DESCENT ON THE SHORES OF THE BALTIC. — REPULSED AT AZOF, WHICH HE AFTERWARDS TAKES. — PETER ENCOURAGES THE ARMY BY REWARDING MERIT ALONE. — HE RESOLVES TO VISIT EUROPE ON A JOURNEY OF OBSERVATION. — DISCONTENTS BREAK OUT AMONGST THE PEOPLE. — CONSPIRACY OF THE STRELITZ DETECTED AND FRUSTRATED BY THE CZAR.

THE accession of Peter to the throne begins that era in Russian history from which the empire dates its greatness. The admission of the usages of civilisation had, up to this period, been accidental, capricious, and partial. The race of the Ruriks had been engrossed on the Asiatic side: the concentration of the principalities, the settlement of domestic feuds, and the struggle against the Tartars, had kept the grand princes so fully employed in the conservation of an empire threatened by so many enemies, that the utmost they could do was to preserve it from dismemberment. They had no leisure to cultivate the arts, or spread the blessings of peace. In the interval of confusion that followed, the contest for the throne absorbed all other considerations; and

the lights that fell from Europe upon the barbaric darkness of the empire, were merely intermittent gleams that showed the gloom which they could not dispel. With the establishment of the second dynasty, that of the Romanoffs, came the necessity of turning the universal attention to the West. Asia was shaken off; the Tartar yoke annihilated; and European arms, during the interregnum, had penetrated to the heart of Russia, and impressed upon its government the importance of watching with vigilance the proceedings of European states. As there was no longer any occupation in the East to divert the attention of the people, and as the integrity of the throne was now firmly established, releasing the sovereign from the cares of internal disquietude, there was sufficient leisure to contemplate the position of other countries, to study their manners, to acquire a knowledge of their military arts, and to profit by an acquaintance with the genius of civilisation. Policy would have drawn Russia into an intercourse with Europe, even if necessity had not compelled her to advance.

Thus Russia, that had been Asiatic under the Ruriks, rapidly developed a tendency to become European under the Romanoffs. But the efforts to encourage this tendency, which were made by the predecessors of Peter, were indecisive and unskilful, and had scarcely any greater effect than that of rendering the people uneasy. The introduction of foreign arts, or even of their results, was a matter of considerable difficulty amongst a people so enslaved by superstition, by ignorant pride, and boorish propensities. Hence the czars borrowed from Europe only by piecemeal, without a plan, and without any co-operation from the people; and the consequence was, that such experiments perished in the mass that rejected them. The czar Alexis had formed some corps of foreign cavalry organised and disciplined in the European manner, but they were lost in the tumultuous multitudes of an army ill paid and irregularly brought together. The imperial army was formed

of the bands of the nobility, who came to the field in such strength and with such preparation as their masters could afford. Some were well armed, and others scarcely armed at all; they were all variously accoutred, undisciplined, and destitute of the spirit of combination. Except the strelitz, there was no regular body of troops in the empire; and they were hardly to be relied upon in the field. The art of war was unknown to the Russians previously to the time of Peter; they were ignorant of the complete use of batteries and fortifications, and the manœuvring of large bodies with regularity in the battle, the pursuit, or the retreat. Disorder reigned over their movements, and revolting cruelties sprang from their want of skill.*

Nor was the trade of Russia placed upon a much more satisfactory basis. Mikhail Romanoff opened a commercial intercourse with England, France, and Persia; and Alexis enlarged upon the plans of his predecessor. He sent an embassy into Spain, France, and Holland, to acquire information with respect to agriculture, and manufactures; and from the last country, he invited some ship carpenters and sailors, with a view to navigate the Volga into the Caspian. The special object of reaching the Caspian was to secure a more rapid and safe means of commercial communication with Persia, on account of the silk trade, which was then rising into importance; but the rebellion of Radzin, who roamed at large in the neighbourhood of Astracan, and committed many piracies on the Caspian, defeated his plans. Alexis also established a trade with China, exchanging the Siberian furs for Chinese silks, and other stuffs, rhubarb, &c. The hemp, soap, potash, and coarse linens of Russia began at this period to form articles of export, and were received largely in Sweden, which transmitted quantities of iron in return; iron not having at that time been discovered in Russia. A few foreign artisans were sprinkled through the empire;

* Patkull complains in his letters that a Russian soldier never knows how to behave in the enemy's country, acting with cruelty even to the unarmed.

but, although the natives tolerated them for the sake of convenience, they never held domestic intercourse with them, and generally treated them with contempt. The difference of costume was a source of constant discontent; for the last points which a barbarous people will consent to surrender, are those which relate to externals.

Some progress had been made in the formation of a code of laws; and, although the statutes were still deficient in a strong moral purpose, distinctness, and a comprehensive grasp of human contingencies, they approached in some measure the perspicuity and applicability of a system. The code that had been compiled by Ivan was taken as the groundwork of an improved pandect by Alexis, who rectified many errors, cleared up many obscurities, and embodied a multitude of stray ordinances that had hitherto either escaped attention, or been used at the will and humour of the judges. A finer spirit of equity and firmness distinguished the legislatorial labours of Alexis than attached to those of his precursors; right and wrong were more closely distinguished; and the adjudication of punishment was in a greater degree removed out of the hands of the judges, whose corruptions were so glaring as to cry aloud for the interference of the government. But the laws of Alexis were not constructed with simplicity; guilt was not sufficiently classified and discriminated, and the substratum of first principles was wanted. Although, therefore, the development of justice in the statutes had certainly made some progress before the time of Peter, much remained to be amended, much to be added, and the whole required to be revised.

The domestic character of the people was higher than these circumstances might appear to indicate. If we look back to the period when they first crowded upon the savage wilds of Russia, and trace their gradual adaptation to the new duties imposed upon them as they concentrated themselves on the soil, forming cities and industrial institutes, and establishing chains of intercommunication, we shall discover a progressive ad-

vance from rudeness towards civilisation; and, although education had as yet scarcely touched the confines of the empire, the people seemed to have purified themselves, by some unconscious process, of much of the grossness that characterised their original nature. But they were still profoundly ignorant. A certain vague sense of moral obligations, of the sacredness of a pledge, of the reciprocal responsibilities of kindred, and of unlimited obedience to their spiritual rulers, supplied the place of knowledge; producing, by a different influence, results not altogether dissimilar on the surface. The aversion which they had to foreign habits exercised so despotic a control over their lives, that very few Russians ever went abroad, unless compelled to do so by the force of circumstances. This avoidance of collision with strangers naturally cast a gloom upon their manners, and imparted a coldness and formality to their bearing which was very repulsive. All their customs, religious and domestic, tended to increase this unsocial gravity. The clergy had invariably repressed the desire for instruction, if it ever, indeed, had manifested itself, and were generally a rude and illiterate body; so that those who should have been the teachers of the people really contributed to enslave the national mind. External forms, prostration before the images of the saints, a punctual observance of the fasts, of attendance at church rites, and a multitude of minute points of outward show, with a blind submission to the leading theological tenets, constituted the whole spirit of the religion of the Russian peasantry. This confinement and depression of the intellectual powers retarded the improvement of the people, or rather placed a limit to their progress; and while their most barbarous qualities were mellowed by accidental influences, their knowledge remained stationary at the threshold of their faith.

What appeared at this crisis to be wanted, was a master mind that should break up old customs, and enlighten the empire against its will. Bound on all

sides by mountains and arid plains, except where a wild sea, that for three fourths of the year was locked up in ice, interrupted the monotonous girth with a no less repulsive barrier, Russia presented a spectacle of moral and physical exclusion which could not be made to yield, unless before some gigantic power that should be capable of creating a new people out of the sturdy and hitherto changeless elements of the old. The man who should effect this mighty revolution required many qualities, as rare in their separate existence as they are almost unknown in their combination: a mind springing far beyond its age, a judgment sound and rapid, a spirit of self-devotion to the interests of humanity, herculean bodily strength, firmness of purpose, and indomitable energy. All these qualities were comprehended in Peter; and, fortunately, he dedicated them with inflexible zeal to the benefit of his country.

The chief object to which Peter directed his attention in the first instance was the art of war; and, to reach its mysteries, he applied himself to the study of the European languages, all of which he acquired before he was twenty years of age. Except the strelitz, and a few regiments stationed on the frontiers, there was no military force in Russia capable of embarking in the extensive enterprises he projected; he therefore resolved to establish a great standing army, and appointed Gordon, a Scotchman, and Lefort, the Genevan, both of whom had been amongst his trained bands and social companions, to raise foreign regiments, that should be equipped and drilled on the model of the troops of Europe. These officers rapidly carried their commissions into execution, and were greatly aided in their progress by the troubles that at that time agitated France and Scotland. In Lefort's regiment, which was 12,000 strong, there were 300 huguenots who had fled from France in consequence of the revocation of the edict of Nantz; and Gordon's force chiefly consisted of Scotchmen, who were glad to escape from the disorders that prevailed in Scotland. This quick and successful

levy, which raised up a military force of 20,000 men, gave a fresh impulse to the genius of the sovereign. He was now surrounded by a well-organised army; and an accidental circumstance directed his attention to the formation of a naval armament, which was destined to introduce his people to a new source of fame and aggrandisement. He was walking one day in the gardens of Imaeloff, a pleasure-house of his father's, and saw the wreck of a small English sailing-boat lying rotting in the grounds. He immediately inquired of Timmerman, his master of mathematics, in what consisted the difference between the shape and construction of this vessel and those which he had observed plying on the rivers. The difference was explained by a reference to the application of sails, an improvement which was unknown amongst the Russians. The curiosity of the czar was instantly excited, and he required that the boat should be refitted and rendered serviceable for sea; but it was with difficulty that a workman could be found who was capable of undertaking the task. At length a Dutchman of the name of Brandt, who had been brought into Russia by Alexis, was discovered in obscurity in Moscow; and, being a regular ship-builder, he was employed to restore the wreck. The vessel was no sooner ready to be re-launched, than Peter had it placed in a large lake, and navigated it himself. Succeeding in this experiment, he ordered Brandt to build two frigates and three yachts; and, floating his little fleet on the same lake, he trained himself in the duties of a pilot.

It is a remarkable proof of the energy of Peter's character, that, in acquiring a knowledge of naval tactics, and becoming a partaker in the practical details of naval life, he was forced to conquer a natural antipathy which he had felt towards water from his youth upwards. This feeling of repugnance was so powerful in him, that whenever he came within sight of the smallest rivulet it threw him into a cold perspiration, which usually terminated in violent spasms. But his mind could not be subdued by a weakness of this kind. He

resolved to overcome a sensibility which resided merely in the nerves; and, adopting the expedient of throwing himself every morning into a cold bath, he persevered in the practice until he completely vanquished his horror of the element. He afterwards became a mariner by taste and habit.

Extending his views forward to the great purposes he contemplated, he visited Archangel in 1694, to inspect the merchant vessels that lay in that harbour, and to study still more minutely the principles of naval architecture. At Archangel he made Brandt build him another vessel, larger than the former ones; and, throughout its progress, he paid constant attention to the workmen, frequently assisting in person in their labours, making drawings and models of different parts, and suggesting and inquiring as the work proceeded. When the vessel was completed he embarked on the White Sea, accompanied by all the ships in the port; and, acting in the capacity of steersman, he employed himself in practising naval manœuvres with his experimental squadron.

From the first moment that the idea of establishing a marine for the empire occurred to his mind, he perceived the signal advantages that it was calculated to procure. The port of Archangel was well adapted for the purposes of commerce: he saw that it might become a valuable outlet for the trade of a nation, but it was too remote on the map to command any other influence, and the White Sea was not navigable for six months in the year. He felt that the possession of a navy and convenient ports would not only incite his subjects to commercial activity, and so improve their condition, but that it would also elevate the name and increase the political power of the empire abroad. These were important considerations; but the geographical situation of Russia was a serious impediment that lay in the way of their accomplishment. She wanted avenues to the sea; she was bound by mountains and wastes; the ocean washed the shores of other lands, and it was necessary to secure a

passage through the intermediate territories, before the grand design could be effected. This drew Peter's attention to the side of the Euxine and Caspian, and to the Baltic; and it was then that the magnificent scheme of stretching the Russian dominions to an extent unparalleled in the history of nations, broke fully upon his mind. It was then that he perceived the master-stroke of the subtle policy of Ivan the Terrible, in his contest with the Livonian knights, which was evidently to obtain outlets on the Baltic, by which she might communicate with Europe: but that idea, shadowed forth by Ivan, was destined to be fulfilled by Peter.

The occupations of the czar at Archangel were interrupted by circumstances that required him to bring his newly-acquired skill into action. The war between the Turks and the Poles had not yet drawn to a termination; and Peter, taking advantage of the moment when the Venetians and the emperor appeared to be making a strong impression on the Turkish territories, declared war upon the Ottoman Porte. His real motive was to secure an extension of his frontier toward the south, to enable him to establish a line of communication with the Black Sea. The failure of Galitzin did not intimidate him; for he calculated, with some confidence, on the improved organisation of the army, and hoped also to derive some farther advantages by being enabled to act by sea. Unfortunately, however, the vessels he had ordered to be built for the purpose were not ready in time, and he was compelled to advance upon Azof with his land forces alone. Azof, then belonging to the Turks, was an important fortress, standing on the point of land where the waters of the Don fall into the Black Sea. This was his first campaign; and he determined to begin with those strict principles of discipline which distinguished his whole career. As an example to the nobility of submission to superior knowledge and experience, he served in the army as a volunteer, intrusting the command of the troops in separate divisions to Lefort, Gordon, Schemeretof, and Schein. He entered himself as a pupil

in the art of war, and observed the most rigid attention to the duties annexed to his rank. After a long and tedious encampment before the walls, the army, now for the first time engaged in a regular siege, could not succeed in forcing an entrance. A Dantzicker, named Jacob, who commanded Peter's artillery, having been imprudently punished by one of the generals with great severity, for some offence he had committed, resolved to revenge the indignity; and, spiking the Russian cannon, deserted to the enemy. His acquirements as an engineer proved afterwards of signal utility to the besieged. This circumstance increased the difficulties of the assailants; and, after attempting in vain to take the citadel by storm, they abandoned the siege, which had cost them great losses, and by which they gained nothing more than a couple of insignificant forts without the fortifications.

But the mistakes that were committed, and the failure that ensued upon them, only served to develope to Peter, with still greater clearness, the principles of the military art. He resolved to rectify the errors of his first enterprise, and to persevere in his design; and prepared actively to renew the siege in the following year, 1696. In the former campaign, he saw the inconvenience of separating his strength into three divisions independent of each other, and acting, consequently, without that vigour which is derived from concentration: he also discovered the inefficiency of his artillery, and the fatal want of transport vessels to prevent the Turks from supplying the fortress with provisions from the side next the sea. To remedy these faults in his plan, he increased his army, and placed it under the sole command of Schein; he employed several foreign engineers to give greater effect to the artillery department; and conveyed down the river Don to the sea of Azof twelve armed vessels which he had caused to be built on the river Voroneja. This was the first time, since the period when the flag of the Varangians waved over those streams, that they had been ploughed by a

Russian vessel. The issue of these excellent arrangements was decisive of the fate of Azof. The Turkish fleet was beaten in their own harbour: the walls of the fortress trembled before the Russian cannon; and the Turks, finding themselves overmatched, capitulated on the 28th of July, and surrendered the town into the hands of the victors. The first use he made of this valuable acquisition was to establish dockyards under the shelter of the fortress, and to commence the augmentation of his fleet, with a view to banish the Turks from these coasts.

A victory, achieved with such comparative facility, but opening so important a prospect to the future greatness of the empire, appeared to require a commemoration that should impress upon the people a sense of the benefits to which it would eventually lead. This was the more necessary, as the innovations which Peter had introduced into the army had not yet become popular, and were looked upon with jealousy and distrust; but the wisdom of the young sovereign had foreseen this bigotry of his subjects, and neutralised its expression by several acts of a benevolent and parental character during the interval of time that elapsed between the two campaigns. It happened to be a season of great scarcity, and Peter made strenuous exertions to obtain a sufficient supply of corn to arrest the threatened distress. This won the gratitude of the nation, and procured time for the impartial trial of the changes he meditated. Immediately after the conquest of Azof, he appointed a triumphal procession of the army into Moscow, resembling, in its warlike appointments, the ovations of the ancient Romans. But there was no display of personal vanity or sovereign ambition in this proud array. It was designed as a testimony to the bravery of the troops, and not as a compliment to the genius of the czar. To reward the soldiers by a public token of admiration, and to inspire the spectators with enthusiasm, were the ends proposed by this spectacle of a victorious army returning home in all the exultation of newly

acquired honours. Schein, as commander in chief of the land forces, and Lefort, as admiral of the fleet, took the first places in the line; while Peter, mingling without distinction amongst the subordinate officers, followed in the crowd. This proof of the greatness of his mind, of his determination to place merit above station, made a deep and lasting impression upon the hearts of the people.

The Black Sea, however useful a possession on its borders was capable of being rendered, was not sufficient for the purpose. It did not open to the czar a passage free and wide to European knowledge. Asia, wild and uncultivated, lay stretched upon its shores, even to Constantinople, intercepting all direct communication between Russia and the south of Europe. The Baltic alone offered the means of introducing civilisation into the empire; but the way to its coast lay through a country, then in the possession of the Swedes, thickly covered with strong fortresses, and defended by a valiant people. The ports of Finland and Riga promised to the enterprising Peter the outlets that he required to release him from Asiatic and Gothic darkness, and lead him into the full light of intellectual Europe. There was a great end to be achieved. But his growing navy required the power that is conferred by experience, before it could be prepared to undertake the command of the Baltic. He knew that in England, in Germany, and in Holland, the arts and sciences flourished under liberal institutions; and he saw that it was in vain to cast himself upon the hazard of an attempt upon the Livonian provinces, until he had first acquired the information which would enable him to turn his conquests to account. The Baltic in his hands, unless he were prepared to cover its waters with an efficient fleet, was as the thunderbolt in the grasp of a child. Resolved not to act prematurely in an enterprise of such vital moment, he determined to inform himself, in the first instance, by personal examination of the actual state of other countries, of civilisation in its full development, and to study its details, before he un-

dertook the project which he now adopted as the plan of his future life. The spectacle of the young sovereign of a barbarous empire, leaving his own dominions on a journey of inquiry for the benefit of his countrymen, that he might return laden with the results of the accumulated knowledge of other lands, was as startling as it was novel and interesting.

He was then, 1697, but twenty-four years of age. The period was one when popular opinion had revolutionised nearly the whole surface of the civilised world. It was admirably adapted to his purposes. In England, the people had just deposed a weak and bigoted monarch, who attempted to arrest the progress of mind; and William III., the intrepid stadtholder of the house of Orange, filled the throne. In France, Louis XIV. was on the point of closing the memorable treaty of Ryswick; Charles XII. had just ascended the throne of Sweden, and the elector of Brandenburg had assumed the regal honours. In Poland, the death of Sobieski opened a contest for the sovereignty, which lay between the prince of Conti and Augustus of Saxony, the latter of whom, for politic reasons, was favoured by Peter; while Mustapha II., quailing before mightier arms, was overthrown by the emperor Leopold. At this juncture, while other powers were engrossed in the agitations consequent upon improved civilisation, Peter the Great left Moscow to go forth into Europe, and glean the ripe ears of the harvest for his own empire.

This project was not one of sudden determination, nor was it carried into effect without an anxious consideration of the prejudices it was likely to disturb. The deeply rooted aversion of the Russians against foreign manners perilled the design at the outset; and the first measures adopted by the czar, preparatory to his own departure from the empire, produced an expression of the popular feeling which nearly cost him his life, and Russia her greatest sovereign.

Immediately after his return from his second campaign, Peter resolved to construct a fleet for the purpose of tak-

ing advantage of his position on the Euxine; but finding that his own revenues were not sufficient for its speedy equipment, he issued a proclamation calling on the patriarch, the clergy, the nobility, and the trading classes to furnish contributions for the building of a certain number of vessels, while he was engaged in hastening the construction of others. This proclamation was peremptory, and its demands, enforced under heavy penalties, rapidly complied with. As there were no Russian workmen who were capable of taking a part in this extensive design, the czar was obliged to employ great numbers of Dutch and Italian ship-builders; and, finding even these insufficient for his prospective wants, he sent several young Russians into Holland and Italy to learn the art, in order that he might have no further occasion to call in foreign assistance in his maritime enterprises. He sent also at the same time, many students into Germany to qualify themselves as engineers for the future service of the empire. It was then that he saw the wisdom of going in person to inform himself minutely of those arts and sciences which he desired to transplant into his native soil.

But there was a body of suppressed discontent amongst the people, generated by the extraordinary innovations which had been already effected, which now broke out into loud and intelligible murmurs. Peter appeared to be utterly different from the popular ideal of a czar. He wanted the mysterious solemnity, the Asiatic pomp, the crushing ostentation: he was too familiar, too diligent, too democratic in his habits and opinions. Other czars appeared but seldom in public, and even then only on occasions of great moment, and surrounded by guards and eastern parade, which kept them at a profound distance from the enslaved and awe-struck people. Peter, on the contrary, dispensed with the idle display of sovereignty; he was to be seen every day in the square of the Kremlin, exercising his troops, or to be met with in the plainest dress in the streets on his way to visit some of the private citizens, or in the workshops of the

artisans, where he spent a great part of his time. The unaccustomed affability of his bearing was so contrasted with the imperious conduct of his predecessors, that the ignorant classes became alarmed: they could not comprehend the phenomenon of a czar living and moving like themselves, subjected to the same physical infirmities, enduring similar bodily toils, and descending from the luxuries of a throne to mingle in the labours of the commonalty. They believed that the czar was the special representative of Heaven, and they trembled at the heresies of a mortal monarch who appeared anxious to cast from him all those splendours and mysteries which had hitherto been the objects of their blind veneration. The alterations, too, which Peter had introduced, touched this ancient bigotry, and filled them with surprise and discontent. He had organised a standing army of foreigners, and sent the greater part of the strelitz to serve on the frontiers,—a body of men, who, unpopular as their ferocities had rendered them, were still, simply because they were Russians, entrenched in the regards of the people. He had built a navy, and made the public pay for it, which was altogether a dangerous novelty, that might lead to the most disastrous changes in the domestic economy. He had taken common burghers into his confidence, and treated the nobility with no greater respect than if they belonged to the middle ranks, heaping royal distinctions upon merit alone. He had sent many young men out of the country, an act which was in itself a contravention of the spirit of all preceding laws; and, as if to aggravate the crime of this unprecedented proceeding, he had selected Italy, the seat of a religion which the people abhorred, as the locality where they were to imbibe new ideas with a view to further encroachments. Nor was this all: Peter, it appeared, was not satisfied with these revolutionary schemes, but he had resolved to travel abroad himself, which was the most appalling and inexplicable part of his whole conduct.

The gathering dissatisfaction spread rapidly from rank to rank and from place to place. The nobles,

stripped of their hereditary consequence by Feodor, were foremost in their resistance to the new system. They opposed it because it demanded implicit obedience, created the necessity of learning novelties as the way to greatness, made rank dependent upon intellectual power, and deprived mere birth and fortune of all the extrinsic advantages which had been hitherto attached to them. The clergy were equally disposed to set themselves against all attempts to enlighten the people. They knew that their ascendancy depended upon the enslavement of the multitude, and that it was their interest to keep down the spirit of inquiry. Ignorant themselves, they were only so far in advance of their flocks as to enable them to repress their progress. As a corporation, they were bound by a common pledge of immutability; and as the expounders of a religion of ceremonials, they were the ministers of a gloomy fanaticism that expelled the light of knowledge from its dark precincts. The people, of course, would have been easily seduced into an imitation of their superiors, even if long habit and the influence of deeply-impressed barbarism had not been sufficient to render improvement odious. Both causes operated. They emulated the zeal of their masters and their pastors, and were urged by a universal apprehension of the danger of foreign impregnation to rebel against the designs of the czar. But Peter had not undertaken an enterprise of such magnitude without estimating in the first instance the elements of resistance. He was aware that he was beginning a new system; that the features of the old would not only be modified, but displaced; and that, in order to make Russia an European empire, it was necessary to commence by concentrating the governing power solely in himself. To have scattered the regenerating authority amongst many, to have divided with others the operations of improvement, would have been to let in schisms and disputes where all should be harmonious and decisive. He was, therefore, as despotic as he was energetic: he made no account of the nobility, and so surpassed them in the

grandeur of his purposes that they could not make head against him. The priests he never paused to conciliate: he considered them as a body subservient to the state, and he kept them so clear of his movements that he rendered them of necessity obedient to his will. The people alone — an enormous mass, difficult of conviction, slow to receive the benefits of amelioration, and brutalised by habitual slavery — occupied his attention. It was for them he laboured, but he knew that they would be the last to acknowledge the utility of his labours. He could not hope for their support until their support should be no longer necessary. There was, therefore, but one course left open to him — to force upon them the good they refused, to compel them to conform to measures which were for their own advantage, but which they obstinately resisted, and to impress upon them, by vigorous examples, the firmness of his intentions. An opportunity was now at hand to make the first example, and he availed himself of it with a resolution that appalled his enemies.

The strelitz, perceiving the disorders that prevailed amongst the people, and groaning under the severity with which they had been treated, entered into a conspiracy to take away the life of the czar. The plan proposed was to set the city on fire at night, and then, when Peter, according to the custom of the czars, should have shown himself in the streets to superintend the extinction of the flames, to murder him in the crowd; then to fall upon the foreign soldiers and massacre them, and, when that feat was accomplished, to release the princess Sophia from her convent and place her upon the throne. Two leaders of the strelitz, Tsikler and Sukanin, were at the head of this infamous plot. The place of rendezvous was at the house of Sukanin; and on the night arranged for the consummation of the conspiracy, a number of the leagued assassins assembled there at a grand banquet, to inspire themselves, by a preliminary revel, with courage for the indiscriminate slaughter of their masters. Two of the party, however,

lost all their resolution under the influence of intoxicating liquors: fear took possession of their minds, and, asking leave of their comrades to go home and sleep until midnight, under a pretext of having drunk too freely, they left the house, and hastening to the palace, disclosed the whole design to Peter. The czar immediately wrote to the captain of one of his regiments of guards, commanding him to repair with his troop to Sukanin's house, and to invest it in perfect silence precisely at ten o'clock. In the haste and confusion of the moment, Peter wrote eleven instead of ten, and despatched the communication under the impression that he had written the appointment as he had intended. Shortly after ten, he went alone to the house, expecting to find it surrounded by the soldiers, and to discover the conspirators already in fetters. To his great surprise, however, the doors were unguarded; but, hearing a considerable noise, and supposing that the soldiers had already entered, he went forward, and in a few minutes found himself, single and unarmed, in the midst of the desperate band, who were at that moment uttering, with loud exclamations, the last words of an oath, pledging themselves to his destruction. The unexpected circumstance occasioned some temporary confusion amongst the traitors; but they secretly resolved to avail themselves of so fortunate an accident, and to accomplish on the spot the murder which appeared to be thus strangely facilitated to their hands. Peter saw at once the peril in which he was placed, but, irritated as he was at what he conceived to be the culpable negligence of his officer, he suppressed his emotions with great presence of mind, and advancing with a friendly air into the midst of the group, he accosted them in terms of familiarity. He said that, having seen a light in the house as he was passing by, and hearing the sounds of revelry, he had entered to share in their amusements; and, requesting that his presence might not interrupt their enjoyments, he begged leave to join them at their table. Seating himself accordingly, and filling a glass to their health,

he affected the utmost goodwill; and his assassins, shamed by the cordiality of his manners, could not avoid returning the courtesy. But this masquerade did not last long: a few more glasses drew out the spirit of the malcontents: they became impatient of their object, and began to consult each other, by signs and significant looks, upon the necessity of falling on him at once. Peter watched all their motions narrowly, but without seeming to do so. At last they grew more bold and explicit, and one of them, stooping over the table to Sukanin, exclaimed in a low tone of voice, "Brother, it is time!" Sukanin, shrinking, probably, from his personal responsibility as master of the house, hesitated for a moment; when Peter, who providentially heard the approaching footsteps of his guards, rising suddenly from his seat, struck the traitor a blow on the face, which prostrated him on the ground, crying aloud, "Not yet, villain: if it is not yet time for you, scoundrel, it is for me!" At that moment the guards rushed in; and the conspirators, terror-smitten by the rapidity of the czar's action and the gathering of the guards, were thrown into consternation. They fell on their knees, and, in despairing accents craved for pardon. But Peter was inexorable, and ordering the soldiers to put them in chains, he turned violently to the captain of the guard, and striking him on the face, reproached him for so base a neglect of his duty: but the captain, who was exact to the hour, produced Peter's written order. The czar perceived his error, and, always as prompt to atone for injury as to inflict punishment, he clasped the officer in his arms, and, kissing him on the forehead, declared him blameless, and committed the custody of the conspirators to his charge.

This was the first outbreak of the popular feeling, and Peter resolved to make the penalty even more terrible than the crime. He first condemned the culprits to the rack, and then, while they were suffering the agonies of that punishment, he ordered their members to be slowly and successively mutilated, and life to

be extinguished by a final process. When this was done, he caused their heads to be placed on the summit of a column, which was surrounded by their mangled limbs, placed in revolting regularity. The sight threw the populace into horror: it was congenial with the barbarous habits of the country, but exceeded in the care and exquisiteness of its arrangements any punishment which even the Russians had ever witnessed before. The only excuses of which it admitted were the exigency of the occasion, the customs of the country, and the bad education of Peter.

CHAP. II.

PETER DEPARTS ON HIS JOURNEY, AND PASSES THROUGH ESTHONIA, LIVONIA, PRUSSIA, AND THE NORTH OF GERMANY, INTO HOLLAND. — HIS OCCUPATIONS AT SAARDAM. — HE GOES OVER TO ENGLAND. — RETURNS TO HOLLAND, AND PROCEEDS TO AUSTRIA. — IS SUDDENLY CALLED HOME BY A SECOND REVOLT OF THE STRELITZ. — SANGUINARY VENGEANCE OF PETER. — HE BANISHES THE PRINCESS EUDOKHIA TO THE CLOISTERS FOR LIFE. — RETREAT AND DEATH OF THE PRINCESS SOPHIA. — EXTINCTION OF THE STRELITZ. — EUROPEAN COSTUME INTRODUCED INTO RUSSIA. — PETER ABOLISHES THE OLD TITLES, AND ADOPTS A NEW TABLE OF PRECEDENCY. — HE ESTABLISHES RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, AND IS BRANDED BY THE PRIESTS WITH THE NAME OF ANTICHRIST. — THE JULIAN CALENDAR ADOPTED. — REFORMS IN THE CONDITION OF WOMEN, AND IN THE HABITS OF DOMESTIC LIFE. — THEATRICAL REPRESENTATIONS. — EXTENSIVE ECCLESIASTICAL CHANGES CONTEMPLATED AND EFFECTED BY PETER.

THIS terrible proof of Peter's boldness and determination had a decisive effect upon the discontented masses of the population. Even the strelitz, accustomed to ferocious acts of vengeance, were appalled by the minute details of the terrible execution of their comrades; and, for a time at least, suppressed the hatred they entertained against the innovator. Tranquillity being apparently restored, the czar adopted measures for preserving it during his absence, and appointed Romodanovsky, an old boyard of inflexible resolution, of a rugged nature, and unpurchasable honesty, to assume the temporary government. The czar was assured of the character of his substitute, and felt confident of the course he would pursue in the event of its becoming necessary to make a second sacrifice to the imperious demands of the new era: but, in order to diminish the difficulties and increase the responsibilities of Romodanovsky, he left Gordon, the Scotch general, behind him, at the head of 12,000 highly disciplined

soldiers, principally Frenchmen, and all accoutred and trained after the fashion of the Europeans. These troops, created by the czar, felt that their existence depended upon their fidelity, and that, at this momentous crisis, the fate not only of the sovereign but of the empire itself was intrusted to their keeping. Surrounded by a population that trembled, doubted, and menaced, and in collision with a powerful body that had hitherto maintained a stern ascendancy even over the throne itself, and that was now groaning under inflictions that maimed its power and crushed its hopes, the army of Gordon could not help being faithful. They were distrusted by the people, hated by the strelitz, and looked upon by the shattered nobility and the adherents of the cloistered Sophia as the abettors of a new system, that threatened to overturn the beloved customs which a long series of barbarous reigns had introduced and sanctified. Fortunately for Peter, the elements against which the soldiery had to contend were of a nature which even their treachery could not conciliate, so that, in the very extremity of danger, they had no choice between death and fidelity.

These preliminary arrangements having been concluded, Peter undertook his first journey in 1697. The details of this curious chapter in the personal career of Peter scarcely belong to history, nor are the materials of sufficient general interest to occupy a space in the annals of so great an empire. A short and rapid sketch of his route will be enough for all the purposes demanded at the hands of the historian.

With a view to the grand design he meditated of securing an outlet on the Baltic, he made a swift progress through Esthonia and Livonia, which were at that period dependent upon Sweden. Here he made himself complete master of the military positions, the internal resources, and means of communication which these provinces possessed; and having satisfied himself of the value of annexing them to his own territories, and of the most decisive method of securing them, he passed into Prussia,

acquiring considerable information as he proceeded, and from thence through the north of Germany into Amsterdam, establishing himself in an obscure and miserable lodging near the dock-yard of Saardam, amongst the Dutch fishermen. Lefort, Menzikoff, Golowin, and others travelled with him *incognito:* these persons sometimes, according to circumstances, assuming the character and credentials of a Russian embassy, while the czar appeared merely in their train; and on other occasions sinking into the obscurity of artificers, whenever opportunity offered, which, however, it appears the czar found it very difficult to accomplish.

When Peter went into Saardam he devoted himself to the examination of the shipping in the harbour of Amsterdam; and it is stated that his inquisitive mind carried him into situations of considerable peril; for in order to see every thing with his own eyes, he frequently clambered up the sides of the vessels, climbed the rigging, and inspected all those parts of the naval armament to which the experienced sailor alone could expect to obtain access with security. On these occasions he was subjected to considerable inconvenience and vexations by the vulgar curiosity of the populace, who followed him wherever he went in crowds, pressing upon him, and besetting him with exclamations and commentaries. This unaccustomed annoyance had so great an effect upon him as to throw him frequently into a violent rage, terminating in a convulsion, which resembled a cataleptic fit, continuing for some hours, and producing the most excruciating agonies. Some of his biographers inform us that he was subject to visitations of this frightful kind from his childhood, and that they were originally caused by an attempt of the strelitz to murder him; but it is more likely that they resulted from the intemperate habits of his youth, and the excessive indulgence of his passions. They were sometimes brought on by the sight of objects to which he entertained an antipathy, such as a black beetle, and other reptiles that early superstition had led him to abhor; and the society of

women is said to have been the only remedy that was ever found to be successful in assuaging them. But in these foolish and wayward weaknesses of a prince who demonstrated on so many trying occasions his power of adaptation, and, still more, his indomitable courage and strength of mind, we can hardly recognise any other influence than that of contradictory self-will, that would fain make a man a despot over himself. Peter could control his passions when necessity demanded such a sacrifice; he was not liable to convulsions on the eve of battle or in the midst of danger; and it is not assuming more than the remainder of his character justifies, to affirm, that these intervals of physical suffering were but vents of the savage humour that could not always be appeased by violence and cruelty.

At Saardam he took the name of Peter Timmerman, and hired himself as a workman to a ship-builder, for the purpose of learning more effectually the art upon which he hoped to found the future greatness of his country. In this capacity he observed the most scrupulous regularity, attended his work at the prescribed hours in common with the rest of the artificers, laboured hard from morning until night, and received his wages like the other workmen. With the revenue of an empire at his command, it is worthy of remark that he lived exclusively upon the wretched stipend which he thus procured by daily toil. His associates do not appear to have entered very heartily into this scheme of the czar's, although he insisted upon their following his example: they treated it as a royal jest, and while Peter was subsisting upon coarse food and living in a hovel, they resided in a comfortable house, and enjoyed all the luxuries of their station.

It was during this memorable period that Peter issued instructions, from his hut at Saardam, to his army under the command of general Shejn and prince Dolgoruki, then acting against the Turks, the result of which was a complete victory over the infidels, and the conquest of the town of Precop in August 1697.

Having accomplished the object for which he had visited the Dutch dock-yard, and acquired a complete knowledge of naval architecture in all its branches — which he did with extraordinary facility — he left Holland and went over to England. William III., the minister of a great revolution himself, gave a cordial welcome to the reformer of Russia; and, as a testimony of his personal regard, presented the czar with a beautiful yacht, which Peter prized as a gift of inestimable value. But it was not to enjoy the ease, and sun himself in the flattery, of the court that Peter had come to England. The same motive that sustained him in a state of privation at Saardam, and that tempted him to risk the safety of his throne by absenting himself from its protection, urged him to pursue the objects of his journey with undeviating zeal. Retiring, therefore, from the palace, he took up his residence in one of the dock-yards at Deptford, where many a legend, in which the fabulous, no doubt, bears a considerable proportion, is still related of the zeal with which he followed his craft of ship-building. Nor did he confine himself to this favourite occupation. Resolved to profit by the peculiar superiority of every country he traversed, he applied himself during his stay in England to the study of a great variety of trades and manufactures, and to acquire a competent knowledge, practical as well as theoretical, of anatomy, chemistry, and the art of fortification: astronomy and geography, and the moral sciences, also engrossed a large share of his attention. As soon as he had obtained a sufficient stock of information in each to enable him afterwards at his leisure to follow them to their final results, he prepared to continue his journey, never allowing himself to indulge in the repose or the amusements to which his opportunities frequently invited him.

When his curiosity was sufficiently gratified in England, he returned to Amsterdam, and from thence passed into Austria, proposing to extend his travels through Italy homewards. Just, however, as he was

on the eve of leaving Vienna to prosecute his journey to Venice, intelligence reached him that the rebellious strelitz had broke out into fresh revolt.

The ambition of Sophia was not yet quenched. Even in her prison she continued to revolve plans for the recovery of the throne. The absence of Peter,—his unpopularity with particular classes, whose personal interests were compromised by his persevering spirit of alteration,—and his recent severity to the strelitz, appeared to create a favourable opportunity for carrying her daring purposes into execution. During Peter's residence in Holland he had signed an edict ordering a body of his troops, consisting chiefly of strelitzes, to repair to the Polish frontiers to be ready in case of necessity to support Augustus, the elector of Saxony, against the claims of the French prince de Conti, they having both been chosen by a double election for the throne of Poland, and Peter having previously declared himself in favour of the former. The service was not relished by the obstinate janissaries; and Sophia, availing herself of the moment when they were ripe for any pretext to avoid a duty which was irksome to them, easily persuaded them to abandon the enterprize and proceed to the capital. The excuse which they offered on leaving the ranks of the army — for they were too much terrified by the horrible punishments which they had lately witnessed not to frame some excuse — was, that the czar had died abroad, and that they considered it necessary to go to Moscow in order to proclaim the succession of the young Alexey Petrovitch. They degraded several of their officers who refused to associate with them in their rebellious proceedings, and, elevating others in their place, proceeded towards Moscow with more show of resolution than was consistent with their safety. Romodanovsky had received information of their designs, and, without pausing to await the developement of the plot, ordered general Gordon to oppose them at the head of his experienced force. Gordon at first attempted gentle methods, and endeavoured to

persuade the strelitz to return to their duty; but the priests — incensed against Peter for entering into alliances with foreign heretics — urged on the traitors to their fate, declaring that their cause was sacred and invulnerable. This determined Gordon; he held no further parley, but advanced upon them in form. The contest was short and decisive: the strelitz were vanquished, taken prisoners, and thrown into chains to await the return of Peter.

When the czar arrived in Moscow, these events had already taken place. He came amidst the rejoicings of the easy victory; and, on finding that numbers of the insurgents were yet alive, inclosed in his dungeons, he resolved to take a revenge which should smite the hearts of the strelitz, and paralyse any remaining project they might be disposed to entertain.

The enormities which were not only sanctioned but devised by Peter, throughout a life of toil and comprehensive utility, will always afford a subject of vague speculation to the philosopher. The czar obviously surpassed all his countrymen in knowledge, in the adaptability of character necessary to the reception of civilisation, in the recognition of the vanity and guilt of despotic usages, and in a clear perception not only of the value of education, but of the means by which it could be promoted and established in detail. Yet, with all these lofty attributes, with a mind stored with varied information, and active in the advancement of moral and political improvements, he occasionally committed wilful excesses of personal intemperance, and judicial, or rather extra-judicial, tyranny, which are scarcely paralleled even in the dark annals of his own country. The irregularity of youth would certainly afford an apology for the errors of a less vigorous and healthy mind; but the intellect of Peter had grown up into colossal power, and could neither have been unconscious of the needless extremity to which he sometimes carried his punishments for political offences, nor insensible to the serious jeopardy in which such ex-

travagant cruelties placed the very objects to which he dedicated the whole energies of his mind and body. These inconsistencies in his nature, which have not even the poor apology of sudden anger (for his revenge, as in the instance of this last revolt of the strelitz, continued unsatisfied on different occasions for several months), are as unaccountable as they are injurious to his fame. He was a great man, clouded as his career was with acts of sanguinary violence; but how much greater would he have been if these desolating crimes had found no place in his history!

Some of his biographers have endeavoured to excuse his terrible punishment of the strelitz, by exhibiting in a strong light the crimes of which that insolent body had been guilty: but the vindication of the atrocities of the sovereign derives no support from the argument of retaliation. The monarch should not be moved by passion, but guided by justice; and Peter, in a multitude of ways, proved that he was deeply impressed with the wisdom as well as the necessity of keeping himself aloof from the base prejudices that imparted to revenge the sanctity of a virtue.

The particulars of the vengeance which, on this dreadful occasion, the czar inflicted upon the strelitz are revolting. He did not satisfy himself with ordinary cruelty, but spared no detail of physical pain that could prolong and render still more acute the dying agonies of his victims. He first put them to the torture, interrogating and reviling them during the operation; and when he had sufficiently feasted his eyes with that exhibition of cruelty, he ordered 2000 of the mangled wretches to be put to death, taking a part in the executions himself, and compelling his nobles to assist him in cutting off the heads of the guilty chiefs. Throughout this barbarous scene, Peter, seated on his throne, gazed with calm and unpitying looks on the work of death, and never moved from his stern composure except to indulge his cruelty by participating in the business of the executions. Nor did his vengeance rest

here: to these horrors he added the intoxication of wine, as if his blood were not inflamed enough already. With the wine-cup in one hand, and the axe in the other, he drank twenty successive draughts, as he smote off twenty successive heads within a single hour, exulting at every stroke in the skill and dexterity he displayed.*

Even these excesses did not suffice to propitiate the rage of the czar. For five succeeding months, Russia was destined to witness the axe, the gibbet, and the wheel in constant activity. The whole empire was shaken with apprehension, and the name of Peter at last became a word of terror to the population. Even his consort was not exempt from punishment: suspecting that she had some share in the late revolt, he banished her for life to the cloisters; and, from that time, ceased to regard his son Alexis with the same parental fondness which he had previously exhibited towards him.†

* M Printz, ambassador from the court of Prussia, was present on this occasion. When Peter, in the midst of the revelry, had completed his horrible purpose, he proposed to M Printz to try his skill, which, of course, the ambassador declined. Voltaire, in his history, omits this anecdote, although it was communicated to him by Frederic II. then prince royal. Frederic, in a note to Voltaire, draws an emphatic summary of the character of Peter in these words: — "The czar had not the slightest tincture of humanity, of magnanimity, or of virtue: he had been brought up in the grossest ignorance, and only acted by the impulse of his unruly passions." In his life of Charles XII, which had been written previously, Voltaire gives credit to the story; but the documents he received from Russia for the purpose of writing the life of the czar induced him to consider it a fabrication. Of course, it was not likely that Catherine would wish to give currency to such an anecdote, and it was therefore not surprising that she should have omitted it, or even denied its truth, in the papers she transmitted to the historian: but it is strange that so shrewd a writer as Voltaire did not regard such authority with more suspicion. Levesque and Segur adopt the statement of M. Printz, and although there never was a sovereign concerning whom greater calumnies have been circulated, this anecdote of Peter's cruelty appears to be fully entitled to credit.

† This lady, Eudokhia Lapuklim, was unfortunate in her union from the beginning, and early inspired Peter with aversion. Descended from an ancient family, she never could reconcile herself to his innovations, his contempt of hereditary rank, and his opposition to the clergy She frequently, too, reproached him for his illicit amours, and finally created in him a strong dislike, which only wanted a sufficient occasion to be resolved into expression. The revolt of the strelitz furnished the desired excuse. When she was banished, Peter raised Ann Moens, a young Fleming, with whom he had long held a private correspondence, into favour; and Eudokhia hurt, perhaps, at this public insult, resolved to avenge herself. She accord-

In the following year these ferocious acts produced such results as might have been anticipated. Insurrections broke out in distant parts of the empire; the discontent of the people could not be repressed, and the safety of the czar was threatened by increasing proofs of popular disgust. But Peter was prepared for these manifestations of disfavour; he had entered upon a decisive course, and was resolved to persist even at the cost of the throne itself. Eighty strelitz, who had taken part in the disturbances, were dragged from Asoph to Moscow in chains; and their heads, held up at each interval by the hair, and shown to the assembled crowd, were successively struck off by the hands of the czar.

But, terrifying as this spectacle was, it did not completely destroy the lingering projects of the strelitz; they still secretly looked towards Sophia, and still hoped that the czar might be driven from the throne. Three of their body rashly prepared an address to the princess, inviting her to assume the crown; but the vigilant officers of the czar discovered the authors, and Peter hanged them in front of the princess's windows. As if, however, this consummation were not enough to demonstrate to the unfortunate Sophia the hopelessness of her ambitious designs, he ordered the stiffened arm of one of the dead men to be placed in her chamber with the rebellious address clasped in the fingers in the attitude of presentation, until it should moulder into dust and drop at her feet. This inhuman taunt appears to have broken the heart of the princess; she renounced the world, went into a convent, changing her name to that of Marpha, and died in 1704.

ingly lavished marked kindness on a boyard named Glebof, and was not even careful to conceal the attachment she had formed. The czar, who, heedless about his own perfidies, would not submit to the perfidies of others, now increased the rigours of her imprisonment, repudiated her in form, and impaled Glebof alive. The wretched victim is said to have remained four and twenty hours on the spike before he expired; and, during that protracted agony, the czar approached to enjoy the horrible sight, when Glebof, spitting in his face, desired the tyrant to be gone.

In the meanwhile, the spirit of domestic revolt lost the powerful agency through which it had hitherto been articulated. Peter felt that these examples of cruelty were not decisive of the issue between him and the strelitz; and he resolved to carry into effect the measure of their utter extinction, the necessity for which had been long apparent to him. The foreign troops in his service, while they were well aware that their own security depended upon the rigour of the czar towards the strelitz, regarded his barbarous atrocities with horror, and hardly estimated the advantages of a protection purchased by such guilty excesses. When, however, he declared his intention of disbanding the ferocious troops, and dispersing them over the empire, so that they should no longer possess the means of communication or co-operation, or the arms and resources of military organisation; his disciplined army, chosen from amongst the ranks of the experienced soldiery of civilised Europe, rallied around him with renewed energies, confident of the mighty changes which his genius was about to accomplish.

Now commenced the reign of improvement. Peter seems to have always acted with a full consciousness that his life was to be a period of contention, sometimes against declared enemies, sometimes against secret plotters, and always against the ignorance and superstition of his subjects. For these struggles he was permanently prepared. His means were never exhausted: his invention was fertile in remedies: his self-possession never forsook him: and, whether threatened from within or from without, he still persevered in forcing upon Russia the civilisation she abhorred.

He addressed his first reform to externals, which constitute in an uneducated people the most important feature of their nationality, and become by force of habit, and the incapacity to distinguish between things and their types, as much an object of veneration as the essentials with which they are supposed to be connected. So long as the Russians wore the flowing and

monotonous dress of the Asiatics, and the beard of the Tartars, so long would they continue to preserve the barbarous manners which their costume perpetually kept in their memory. To break up old habits of conformity put on with the dresses of the East, to infuse new opinions, and to establish an outward likeness to Europe, as a preliminary to the introduction of European customs, were the first objects of Peter's system of improvement. He compelled the great body of the people to adopt the convenient dresses of Europe, which he conceived were more available in the practice of the military art, and in the pursuit of the various trades and manufactures which he was rapidly bringing into the empire from other countries, than the loose and cumbrous costume to which they had hitherto been accustomed. The European dress, susceptible of endless variations, admitting of a more active exercise of the limbs, and tending gradually to the cultivation of taste springing out of the different fashions it suggested, would, he expected, ultimately lead to a more extensive cultivation of an intercourse with European modes. The difficulties were at first almost insurmountable. The people relinquished their favourite dress only by compulsion; and such was the resistance offered to the czar's injunction for the shaving of their beards, that he was obliged to compromise the matter by giving them the alternative of wearing their beards on condition of the payment of a small impost, which the majority of the Russians preferred.* It was a contest of ceremonials — the most inveterate that ever was waged. Indomitable determination alone could have crowned the side of the reformer with a victory over the tens of thousands whom he subdued into improvement.

* Some of the superstitious Russians, who were too poor to pay the tax, but were yet unwilling to submit to a novelty which they really believed was a breach of the orthodox faith, religiously retained their beards, after they were shaven off, and ordered them to be deposited in their coffins after their decease, in order to propitiate the favour of St. Nicholas, who might otherwise refuse their admittance into heaven, seeing them approach without their beards.

It was necessary, not only to put a tax upon the Asiatic robes as well as the beards, but to throw out a lure for the pride of the nobility, whom he first desired, for the sake of example, to draw into his plans. From the tax upon dress he exempted two classes — the priests and the peasants: the former, because the long and pompous habit was identified with their vocation; and the latter, because he desired to make the old costume appear contemptible and vulgar by permitting it to be worn by the serfs, thus giving to the nobility and the commercial classes an additional motive for adopting the European fashions, to distinguish themselves from the commonalty.

The patience and the time which these changes consumed may be easily conceived. The abhorrence in which Europeans were universally held in Russia had always extended to the peculiar dresses they wore; and the priests, in order to prevent foreigners and heretics from disguising themselves, and so evading the hatred of the people, pronounced it to be an act of sacrilegious profanation for strangers to wear the native garb. By this means foreigners were at all times exposed to popular odium, and compelled to have a quarter appropriated to themselves, as a protection against the indiscriminate hatred by which they were surrounded. The dress of the European was, therefore, the mark of scorn and obloquy; it was associated with the most irritating recollections, and represented in the eyes of the Russians a multitude of hostile principles, in religion, politics, and social economy.

But in issuing his edict to enforce this salutary alteration in the dress of the people, he did not omit to prescribe bounds to any fantastic extravagance in the use of the new costume. He feared, and not without some justice, that it might bring a taste for luxuries in its train, and he resolved to correct such an evil by setting an example of remarkable simplicity and frugality in his own person. It is related of him that he was seldom more than a quarter of an hour at dinner, and that he

used to laugh at the absurd pomp of his favourite, Mentzichoff, who, promoted from the low situation of a pie-boy to a place of confidence at court, never sat down to table without a preliminary flourish of trumpets and various other instruments.* Peter always preserved the utmost plainness in his dress, and even carried that point to an unnecessary excess. A late historian quotes a passage from the manuscript memoirs of a diplomatic agent, which illustrates this peculiarity, and which, although it refers to a late period of his reign, may be quoted here as a proof of his general habits. "On all the solemn festivals," observes the writer, "he only wore the uniform of his preobajenskoi regiment of guards. I saw him, in 1721, give a public audience to the ambassadors of Persia. He entered the hall of audience in nothing more than a surtout of coarse brown cloth. When he was seated on the throne, the attendants brought him a coat of blue gros-de-Naples, embroidered with silver, which he put on with great precipitation, because the ambassadors were waiting for admittance. During this he turned his eyes towards a window where the czarina had placed herself to observe the ceremony. Catherine was heard repeatedly to burst into loud fits of laughter, as the czar seemed to her to be astonished at seeing himself so finely dressed; and the czar laughed at it himself; as also did all the spectators. As soon as the ambassadors were gone, Peter threw off his embroidered coat, and put on his surtout."

But the changes which lay before Peter, of which this

* The history of Mentzichoff's progress is curious. At the age of thirteen or fourteen he left the house of his parents, very poor people on the banks of the Volga, to seek for some service in Moscow, and was taken into the employment of a pastry cook. He had been so wretchedly brought up that he had not even received the rudest elements of education. In this capacity he used to sell pies in the streets of Moscow; and, having a sweet clear voice, was in the habit of recommending his patties in songs of his own composition. The appearance of the lad, which is represented to have been prepossessing, attracted the attention of Lefort, through whose introduction he is said, on some authorities, to have been presented to the czar; while other biographers state, that the czar's regards for him arose from an accidental discovery made by Mentzichoff of a design to poison Peter, which he was enabled to frustrate. The latter statement is not sufficiently authenticated to be relied upon.

was but the prelude, although the most difficult of the whole, and therefore commenced the first in order to give it time to come to maturity while the others were in progress, involved the whole social fabric of the empire. He found that seeds of barbarism were deeply sown in the distinctions of rank without merit, titles without desert, and emoluments without service. He, therefore, abolished the names of boyards, of okolnitchie, and of dumnic-diaki, and substituted in their stead the more civilised and definite titles of presidents, counsellors, and senators. He also adopted a table of precedence, which embraced all persons holding office or appointment, civil or military, under the crown, and divided them into fourteen distinct classes. By the provisions of this table, the sons of the Russian nobility were still permitted to have access to court, but were not allowed to possess any rank as an inheritance, until they had rendered some services to the country. He also abrogated the court of nobles that had hitherto constituted the ministry of the czar, acting with a despotism that enslaved at times even the sovereign himself. In place of this old and corrupt institution he established a senate, or body of official counsellors, dependent on the pleasure of the czar; to which he added ten imperial colleges, for the transaction of public business, each having a separate apartment allotted to itself. The majority of voices determined all questions in the consultations of these bodies.

The illiberal religious prejudices which prevailed throughout Russia, struck at the very head of intellectual improvement, and embittered the imperfect intercourse that existed amongst the people. Hitherto no Christians, except those of the Greek persuasion, were tolerated in Russia; nor were the Russians, of either sex, permitted to intermarry except with persons of their own communion. These interdicts were entirely removed by Peter, and all Christians — jesuits alone excepted, the czar having conceived an aversion to them in consequence of having met so many of them during

his travels through Europe — were permitted to build churches, and intermarry with the native Russians. The clergy, of course, opposed this novelty with furious zeal; but the czar was not to be turned aside from his purpose, even by the maledictions and opprobrious resistance of the church: and, urged onwards by the resentments that every where assailed him, he even went so far as to cause the Bible to be translated into the Slavonian language, and diffused amongst the people. This was the greatest crime of all. The clergy did not hesitate to brand him with the name of anti-Christ, and quoted passages from Scripture in proof. But Peter persisted unmoved.

In the beginning of the year 1700, Peter changed the style, in order to assimilate the Russian calendar with that of modern Europe. In Russia, by an ancient usage, and in the spirit of a poetical mythology, the year began at the fruit season in September; but Peter decreed that the first day of the year should date from January, adopting, however, the old Julian calendar, which is eleven days behind the Georgian, that which is adopted throughout the rest of Europe. The people murmured at an alteration which, for the time, affected their commercial and private transactions, and introduced some confusion into their computations; but Peter only looked to the prospective advantages of familiarising his subjects to the habits of those nations which he desired them to regard as models; and on the first day of the new year he appointed great solemnities, and caused the regulations to be proclaimed from the pulpits and all public places in the different towns of the empire.

The laws respecting females in Russia were, up to this period of universal change, as strict and prohibitory, to the exclusion, however, of polygamy, as those which prevailed in Asia. The people caught the spirit of that luxurious tyranny, and kept their wives and daughters in a state of complete seclusion; the married women being compelled to live in the back part of the houses,

and never suffered to appear abroad except on great holidays in company with their husbands, and the unmarried being kept under still greater restraint. This custom was evidently most unsuitable to a climate which was so cheerless and repelling as to render the enjoyments of social intercourse more necessary to happiness than in less rigorous latitudes: the czar, therefore, encountered little opposition in abrogating the domestic despotism. Marriages had been hitherto contracted without any personal acquaintance between the parties; and the brides and the bridegrooms were united, not by any desires of their own, but by the will of their parents. Peter abolished this barbarous law, and decreed that no marriage should be solemnised until an intimacy of six weeks had taken place between the parties. This arrangement was received with delight by the young of both sexes; and the females, thus at once gained over to the cause which Peter was anxiously labouring to promote, exerted all their influence to bring his innovations into favour. They became the active ministers of a mighty reform, which increased their own power as it advanced towards success.

In the new organisation of society, Peter adopted many methods of drawing the Russians by degrees out of their ancient customs. Sometimes he treated their superstitions with ridicule, occasionally with severity, and frequently brought the old and the new system into direct contrast, so that the people should have an opportunity of examining both and deciding for themselves. Thus he sometimes ordered an entertainment at which the old customs were rigidly observed; and as they formed most cheerless opposition to the new and more agreeable modes of European life, the people were immediately struck with the difference, and so were led, from the small details of social habits, to admit of higher and more important changes.

One of the most remarkable features of this period of Peter's life was, the precision with which he entered into the new-modelling of domestic usages. Hitherto

the women were excluded from general intercourse. Peter resolved to throw open society to them, and accordingly he issued a code of regulations, by which regular evening assemblies—one of the pleasures of civilisation until that time unknown in Russia—were established amongst the families of the aristocracy and wealthy classes. The particulars into which these regulations descended will serve to show the state of ignorance of the people to whom they were addressed. They set forth that the assemblies should be kept three times a week in all houses of the nobility and merchants in rotation; that they should be free to all persons of rank and respectability, and to their wives and daughters; and that they should commence at four o'clock in the afternoon, and close at ten o'clock at night. One of the regulations provided that the host was not to be compelled to receive or wait upon his guests, but that he should provide them with chairs, lights, liquors, and other entertainments, and that the guests were at liberty to disperse themselves amongst the apartments, in one of which dancing was to be provided; in another, cards, chess, and draughts; and in a third, tobacco, &c. The guests were held free to come and go as they pleased. Another article imposed the obligation of bowing to the company on entering and departing from the room; and so minute were the instructions upon minor points of etiquette, that they entered into a specific explanation of the places in which the different servants ought to be dispersed. The violation of any of these rules was visited with a curious punishment, which also prevails amongst the Chinese: the transgressor was compelled on the spot to drink the contents of a large bottle of brandy, called the great eagle. Whether this mode of correcting the barbarous manners of the people was adopted by Peter for the same objects which the Spartans had in view in making the helots drunk, is uncertain; but there is no doubt that it contributed in some measure to check intemperate practices, by exposing their effects before company.

Social advancement did not rest here. Peter, watch-

ful of the sources of national improvement elsewhere, determined to establish a national drama in Russia. Previously to his reign, the only plays that were performed, were the mysteries common to Christendom, and varied agreeably to the rituals of the different churches. These representations were exclusively confined to the monasteries, where they were enacted under the auspices, and adapted to the views, of the priests. Peter established a public theatre in Moscow; and, although the first performances were poor enough, in character and purpose, they nevertheless laid the foundation of an entertainment which has subsequently grown up into importance. To an ingenious Englishman of the name of Maddox, who went to Russia about the year 1775, in the low capacity of a rope-dancer and posture-master, the Russian stage is indebted for a degree of splendour which lifted it at once to no unworthy comparison with the theatres of other countries. From France and England Peter derived a multitude of hints which he rapidly carried into effect on his return. Amongst these were the establishment of an observatory, of a regular administration of merchants to collect the public revenues, of improved roads and regular posts between the principal towns, of boards of commerce and trade, of orders of merit, hospitals and almshouses, and a police office in Petersburg, to which was committed the surveillance of the internal proceedings of the constituted authorities. These novel experiments filled the Russians with surprise, and for a while confounded the notions of right and wrong. They were so attached to the old usages, that they could not be brought, without great difficulty, to fall into the new system, although they could not fail to perceive how much it was calculated to facilitate the operations of business, and in all respects to increase their happiness. In their resistance to the reforms of Peter they were aided by the priests, who had hitherto connected most of the national customs with religion, in order to strengthen their own power. But Peter exposed the

fallacy of their reasoning, and turned them into ridicule. Nor was he satisfied with merely demonstrating the errors to which they clung with such obstinacy. He openly assailed the church in its ministers, taxed the clergy like the rest of his subjects, and issued an ukase prohibiting any of his people from entering into monastic vows until after the age of fifty, a time of life when the worldly habits might be supposed to have become confirmed. This had the immediate effect of reducing not only the influence but the number of the religious establishments, and of extending the means and advancing the interests of the laity. The clergy, however, continued to be so implacable in their hostility, not hesitating publicly to denounce the czar as anti-Christ, that Peter resolved to carry ecclesiastical reformation to a much greater extent than he might have done had the bigoted priesthood been less fierce in their ill-judged zeal.

The power of the patriarchs had from time to time exhibited itself in such offensive shapes, as to justify the apprehension that, if it were not arrested by some prudent restraints, it would at last assume as arrogant pretensions as the papal authority. The patriarchs had by degrees so mixed themselves up with the government as to participate in its functions; they even claimed a power of life and death, and affected a supremacy independent of the czar himself. This was particularly exemplified in the case of the patriarch Nicon, who, under the reign of Alexis, betrayed so much spiritual pride that he was formally deposed, and degraded to his original rank of a simple monk. But Alexis did not venture to proceed beyond the act of deposition ; the period not being ripe, nor the monarch sufficiently imbued with the spirit of improvement, to contemplate the extinction of the office. As soon, however, as the patriarch Adrian died, Peter determined upon availing himself of the optunity which that event afforded him for punishing the presumptuous order, and vindicating the dignity of the sovereign office. He accordingly excused himself, on

the plea of being greatly occupied by business, from turning his attention to the nomination of a successor, and appointed the metropolitan of Rezan to take upon himself the administration of the ecclesiastical affairs of the empire. By this means, without directly proclaiming his intentions in reference to the patriarchate, he effectually abolished the office; but it was not until twenty years afterwards that its abolition was publicly declared. In the year 1721, he instituted a spiritual consistory, called the Holy Directing Synod, which was composed of certain members of the church, who were authorised to hear all matters connected with religion, but to refer their decisions finally to the czar, who was thus made supreme head of the establishment. At that synod, over which Peter presided, a petition from some of the superior clergy was presented, praying of the czar to appoint a patriarch; when Peter, rising suddenly from his seat, and drawing his hanger with one hand and striking the table violently with it, while he smote his breast with the other, exclaimed, "Here is your patriarch!" From that moment the patriarchate was extinguished.

Other measures of ecclesiastical reform were also put into execution. The number of monks and nuns was gradually diminished, and the religious houses were appropriated to purposes of general utility: the monks, who were hitherto for the greater part mere idlers and feasters, were compelled to employ themselves in attending to the wants and ailments of the poor and the disbanded soldiery, who, with that view, were distributed amongst the monasteries; and the nuns were ordered to keep schools for the instruction of the juvenile classes of their own sex, and to foster and administer medicines to the poor. These salutary improvements, unfortunately, were never fully carried into effect, for the lifetime of Peter was not sufficiently long to enable him to complete all the improvements which his energetic spirit suggested.

CHAP. III.

DEATH OF GENERAL LE FORT. — AGGRESSIVE UNION BETWEEN RUSSIA, POLAND, AND DENMARK. — PETER PENETRATES INTO INGRIA, AND IS DEFEATED. — PETER EMPLOYS THE WINTER IN RE-ORGANISING HIS ARMY. — RE-ENTERS THE FIELD AND ACHIEVES SOME SUCCESSES OVER THE SWEDES. — CAPITULATION OF MARIENBURGH. — MARTHA, AFTERWARDS CATHERINE THE GREAT. — CAMPAIGN EXTENDED TO THE NEVA. — THE CZAR LAYS THE FOUNDATION OF ST. PETERSBURG. — DIFFICULTIES IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NEW CAPITAL. — HOSTILITIES RENEWED WITH CHARLES OF SWEDEN. — INGRIA AND COURLAND CONQUERED BY PETER. — WEAKNESS AND PERFIDY OF AUGUSTUS OF SAXONY. — DESIGNS OF CHARLES UPON RUSSIA. — MARCH OF THE SWEDISH TROOPS. — NARROW ESCAPE OF PETER. — HE RETREATS, AND LAYS WASTE THE COUNTRY.

THE external relations, as well as the domestic circumstances, of the empire were at this juncture peculiarly favourable to the czar's grand design of opening a communication with the Baltic. He had just concluded a treaty of peace for thirty years with the Turks, and he found himself at the head of a numerous army, a portion, at least, of which was well disciplined, and eager for employment. The death of general Le Fort, in 1699, at the early age of forty-six, slightly retarded the progress of his movements; but in the following year he prepared to avail himself of events that called other powers into action, and afforded him a feasible excuse for taking the field.

Charles XII., then only eighteen years of age, had recently succeeded to the throne of Sweden. The occasion seemed to yield an auspicious opportunity to Poland and Denmark for the recovery of certain provinces that in the course of former wars had either been wrested from them by Sweden, or ceded by capitulation.

Augustus, the elector of Saxony, called by choice to the throne of Poland, was the first to assert this doctrine of restitution, in which he was quickly followed by the Danish king. Livonia and Esthonia had been ceded by Poland to Charles XI., and the provinces of Holstein and Sleswick had been conquered from Denmark in the same reign, and annexed to the Swedish territories. The object of the allies was to recover those places. Sweden, thus assailed in two quarters, presented an apparently easy victory to the czar, whose purpose it was to possess himself of Ingria and Carelia, that lay between him and the sea. A confederacy was, therefore, entered into by the three powers for the specific view of recovering by war those provinces that had previously been lost by war.* But Peter miscalculated his means. The arms of Sweden were crowned with triumphs, and her soldiery were experienced in the field. The Russian troops, on the contrary, were for the greater part but raw recruits, and, except against the Turks and Tartars, had as yet but little practice in military operations. The genius of Peter alone could have vanquished the difficulties of so unequal a contest.

The preparations that were thus in course of organisation, awakened the energies of Charles. Without waiting for the signal of attack from the enemy, he sent a force of 8000 men into Pomerania, and, embarking with a fleet of forty sail, he suddenly appeared before Copenhagen, compelled the king of Denmark within six weeks to sign a peace, by which the possession of Holstein was confirmed to the reigning duke, and a full indemnity obtained for all the expenses of the war. He had no sooner overthrown the designs of the Danish monarch, than he turned his arms against Poland. Augustus had laid siege to Riga, the capital of Livonia; but that city was defended with such obstinacy by count d'Alberg, that the Polish general was

* Segur.

glad to abandon the enterprise, upon the shallow pretext that he wished to spare the Dutch merchandise which was at that time stored in the port. Thus the confederation was dissolved, and the struggle was left single-handed between the Russians and the Swedes.

Peter, undismayed by the reverses of his allies, poured into Ingria an army of 60,000 men.* Of these troops there were but 12,000 disciplined soldiers; the remainder consisted of serfs and fresh levies, gathered from all quarters, rudely clad, armed only with clubs and pikes, and unacquainted with the use of fire-arms. The Swedish army, on the other hand, was only 8000 strong; but it was composed of experienced battalions, flushed by recent successes, and commanded by able generals. The advanced guards of the Russians were dispersed on their progress, in some skirmishes with the Swedes; but the main body penetrated to the interior, and entrenched itself before the walls of Narva, a fortified place on the banks of the Narowa, a river that flowed from Lake Peipus into the Baltic sea. For two months they lay before the town, when Peter, finding it necessary to hasten the movements of some regiments that were on their march from Novogorod, as well as to confer with the king of Poland in consequence of his abandonment of the siege of Riga, left the camp, delegating the command to the duke de Croi, a Flemish officer†, and prince Dolgorouki, the com-

* Accounts vary considerably as to the numerical strength of this army, some writers estimating it at 80,000, and others rating it as low as 40,000. General Gordon, who held a command at the time, says that the whole force did not exceed 50,000 men; but it was obviously not his interest to exaggerate the number

† From the time of Peter the Great to the present day, a *German party* has gradually grown up in Russia, absorbing all the offices of authority and importance To this curious fact may be referred much of the spirit of Russian diplomacy, which has, of late years, awakened so much attention throughout Europe. The heads of the civil and military departments are at this moment chiefly Germans; and the diplomatic appointments are almost invariably filled by German favourites The present emperor of Russia, Nicholas, who is known to be very partial to the Prussians,— partly, perhaps, on account of their superior military organisation, and partly because their policy exhibits considerable tact and sagacity,—carries this predilection so far as to adopt the German language at court, in preference to the French, which used to be employed there The campaigns of 1830 and 1831 were conducted under the command of Diebitch, a German, while the general officers acting with him, over a force of 200,000 Russians,

missary-general. His absence was fatal to this undertaking. Charles, during a violent snow-storm, that blew directly in the face of the Russians, attacked the enemy in their entrenchments. The besiegers were filled with consternation. The duke de Croi issued orders which the prince Dolgorouki refused to execute, and the utmost confusion prevailed amongst the troops. The Russian officers rose against the Germans, and massacred the duke's secretary, colonel Lyons, and several others.* The presence of the sovereign was necessary to restore confidence and order; and, in the absence of a controlling mind, the soldiers, flying from their posts, and impeding each other in their attempts to escape, were slaughtered in detail by the Swedes. In this exigency, the duke de Croi, as much alarmed by the temper of the Russians as by the superiority of the enemy, together with almost all the German officers in the service, surrendered to the victorious Charles; who, affecting to despise his antagonist, contented himself with retaining a few general officers and some of the Saxon auxiliaries, as prisoners to grace his ovation at Stockholm, and suffered the vanquished troops to return home. Thus failed the first descent upon Ingria, which cost Russia, even on the statement of the czar himself, between 5000 and 6000 men.† The loss of the Swedes is estimated by Peter at 3000, but a modern historian‡ reduces the number to 1200, which, considering the relative position of both armies, and the disadvantages of other kinds under which the Russians were placed, is more likely to be accurate.§

were almost exclusively Germans. The ascendancy of the Germans in Russia has, of course, excited considerable national jealousy: for, in fact, the Germans are in all cases preferred by the emperors. When the emperor Alexander asked the veteran general Yarmaloff what favour he most desired, that brave man replied that the greatest favour he could bestow upon him would be to *make him a German.*

* Voltaire. † Journal de Pierre le Grand. ‡ Voltaire.

§ The superstitions of the people were aptly illustrated on the return of the disheartened troops to the capital, in a prayer which was composed by a bishop, and read in all the churches. It was addressed to the patron of Muscovy, St Nicholas; and, after accusing the saint of having abandoned the Russians, it denounced the Swedes as infidels and sorcerers. "Les

This unpropitious event did not discourage Peter. "The Swedes," he observed, "will have the advantage of us for some time, but they will teach us, at last, how to beat them." If Charles, however, had followed up his success, and pushed his fortunes into the heart of Russia immediately after this victory, he might have decided the fate of the empire at the gates of Moscow. But, elated with his triumphs in Denmark, and tempted by the weakness of the Poles, he embraced the more facile and dazzling project of concentrating his whole power against Augustus, declaring that he would never withdraw his army from Poland until he had deprived the elector of his throne. The opportunity he thus afforded Peter of recruiting his shattered forces, and organising fresh means of aggression, was the most remarkable mistake in the whole career of that vain but heroic monarch.

While Charles was engaged in Poland, Peter gained time for the accomplishment of those measures which his situation suggested. Despatching a body of troops to protect the frontiers at Plescow, he repaired in person to Moscow, and occupied himself throughout the ensuing winter in raising and training six regiments of infantry, consisting of 1000 men each, and several regiments of dragoons. Having lost 145 pieces of cannon in the affair at Narva, he ordered a certain proportion of the bells of the convents and churches to be cast into field pieces; and was prepared in the spring of the year 1701 to resume hostilities with increased strength, and an artillery of 100 pieces of cannon, 142 field pieces, 12 mortars, and 13 howitzers. Nor did he confine his attention to the improvement of the army. Conscious of the importance of diffusing employment amongst his subjects, and increasing their domestic prosperity, he introduced into the country flocks of sheep from Saxony, and shepherds to attend to them,

évêques russes," says Voltaire, in his quaint way, "d'aujourd'hui n'écriraient pas de pareilles pièces : et sans faire tort à St. Nicholas, on s'aperçut bientôt que s'était à Pierre qu'il fallait s'addresser."

for the sake of the wool; established hospitals, and linen and paper manufactories; encouraged the art of printing; and invited from distant places a variety of artisans to impart to the lower classes a knowledge of useful crafts. These proceedings were treated with levity and contempt by Charles, who appears all throughout to have despised the Russians, and who, engrossed by his campaign in Courland and Lithuania, intended to turn back to Moscow at his leisure, after he should have dethroned Augustus, and ravaged the domains of Saxony.

Unfortunately the divisions that prevailed in the councils of Poland assisted to carry these projects rapidly into effect. Peter was anxious to enter into a new alliance with Augustus, but, in an interview he held with that prince at Birzen, he discovered the weakness of his position, and the hopelessness of expecting any effectual succour at his hands. The Polish diet, equally jealous of the interference of the Saxon and Russian soldiery in their affairs, and afraid to incur the hostility of Charles, refused to sanction a league that threatened to involve them in serious difficulties. Hence, Augustus, left to his own resources, was easily deprived of a throne which he seemed to hold against the consent of the people, while Peter was forced to conduct the war alone. His measures were consequently taken with promptitude and decision. His army was no sooner prepared for action than he re-entered Ingria, animating the troops by his presence at the several points to which he directed their movements. In some accidental skirmishes with small bodies of the Swedes, he reaped a series of minor successes, that inspired the soldiers with confidence, and improved their skill for the more important scenes that were to follow. Constantly in motion between Plescow, Moscow, and Archangel, at which last place he built a fortress called the New Dwina, he diffused a spirit of enthusiasm amongst the soldiers, who were now becoming inured to action. An open battle at last took

place in the neighbourhood of Dorpt, on the borders of Livonia, when general Scherematoff fell in with the main body of the enemy on the 1st of January, 1702, and, after a severe conflict of four hours, compelled them to abandon their artillery, and fly in disorder. On this occasion, the Swedes are said to have lost 3000 men, while there were but 1000 killed on the opposite side.* General Scherematoff was immediately created a field-marshal, and public thanks were offered up for the victory.

Following up this signal triumph, the czar equipped one fleet upon Lake Peipus to protect the territory of Novogorod, and manned another upon Lake Ladoga, to resist the Swedes in case they should attempt a landing. Thus guarded at the vulnerable points, he was enabled to prosecute his plans in the interior with greater certainty and effect.

Marshal Scherematoff in the meantime marched upon Marienburgh, a town on the confines of Livonia and Ingria, achieving on his progress another triumph over the enemy near the village of Humolowa. The garrison at Marienburgh, afraid to risk the consequences of a siege, capitulated at once, on condition that the inhabitants should be permitted a free passage, which was agreed to; but an intemperate officer having set fire to the powder magazine, to prevent the negotiation from being effected, by which a number of soldiers on both sides were killed, the Russians fell upon the inhabitants and destroyed the town.

Amongst the prisoners of war was a young Livonian girl, called Martha, an orphan who resided in the household of the Lutheran minister of Marienburgh. She had been married the day before to a sergeant in the Swedish army; and when she appeared in the presence of the Russian general Bauer, she was bathed in tears, in consequence of the death of her husband, who was supposed to have perished in the melée. Struck with her appearance, and curious to learn the history

* Journal de Pierre le Grand.

of so interesting a person, the general took her to his house, and appointed her to the superintendence of his household affairs. Bauer was an unmarried man, and it was not surprising that his intercourse with Martha should have exposed her to the imputation of having become his mistress; nor, indeed, is there any reason, judging by the immediate circumstances, as well as the subsequent life of that celebrated woman, to doubt the truth of the charge. Bauer is said to have denied the fact; which is sufficiently probable, as it was evidently his interest to acquit the lady of such an accusation: but, however that may be, it is certain that prince Menzikoff, seeing her at the general's house, and fascinated by her manners, solicited the general to transfer her services to his domestic establishment; which was at once acceded to by the general, who was under too many obligations to the prince to leave him the option of a refusal. Martha now became the avowed mistress of the libertine Menzikoff, in which capacity she lived with him until the year 1704, when, at the early age of seventeen, she enslaved the czar as much by her talents as by her beauty, and exchanged the house of the prince for the palace of the sovereign. The extraordinary influence she subsequently exercised, when, from having been the mistress, she became the wife of the czar, and ultimately the empress Catherine, developing, throughout the various turns of her fortune, a genius worthy of consort with that of Peter himself, opens a page in history not less wonderful than instructive. The marriage of the sovereign with a subject was common in Russia; but, as Voltaire remarks, the union of royalty with a poor stranger, captured amidst the ruins of a pillaged town, is an incident which the most marvellous combinations of fortune and merit never produced before, or since, in the annals of the world.

The most important operations of the campaign in the year 1702 were now directed to the river Neva, the branches of which issue from the extremity of Lake

Ladoga, and, subsequently reuniting, are discharged into the Baltic. Close to the point where the river flowed from the lake was an island, on which stood the strongly fortified town of Rotteburg. This place, maintaining a position that was of the utmost consequence to his future views, Peter resolved to reduce in the first instance; and, after laying siege to it for nearly a month, succeeded in carrying it by assault. A profusion of rewards and honours were on this occasion distributed amongst the army; and a triumphal procession was made to Moscow, in which the prisoners of war followed in the train of the conqueror. The name of Rotteburg was changed to that of Schlüsselburg, or City of the Key, because that place was the key to Ingria and Finland. The solemnities and pomp by which these triumphs were celebrated were still treated with contempt by Charles, who, believing that he could at any moment reduce the Russians, continued to pursue his victories over Augustus. But Peter was rapidly acquiring power in the very direction which was most fatal to his opponent, and which was directly calculated to lead to the speedy accomplishment of his final purpose.

The complete occupation of the shores of the Neva was the first object to be achieved. The expulsion of the enemy from all the places lying immediately on its borders, and the possession or destruction of all the posts which the Swedes held in Ingria and Carelia, were essential to the plans of the czar. Already an important fortress lying close to the river was besieged and reduced, and two Swedish vessels were captured on the lake by the czar in person. Further successes over the Swedish gun-boats, that hovered near the mouth of the river, hastened his victorious progress; and when he had made himself master of the fortress of Kantzi, on the Carelian side, he paused to consider whether it would be advisable to strengthen that place, and make it the centre of future operations, or push onwards to some position nearer to the sea. The latter proposal was decided upon; and a marshy island, covered with

brushwood, inhabited by a few fishermen, and not very distant from the embouchure of the Neva, was chosen as the most favourable site for a new fortress. The place was, by a singular anomaly, called Lust Eland, or Pleasure Island, and was apparently ill adapted for the destinies that in after-times surrounded it with glory and splendour. On this pestilential spot, Peter laid the foundations of the fortress of St. Petersburg, which gradually expanded into a city, and ultimately became the capital of the empire.*

The country in the neighbourhood of this desolate island, or cluster of swamps, was one vast morass. It did not yield a particle of stone, and the materials with which the citadel was built were derived from the ruins of the works at Nianshantz. Nor were these the only difficulties against which Peter had to contend in the construction of the fortifications. The labourers were not furnished with the necessary tools, and were obliged to toil by such expedients as their own invention could devise. So poorly were they appointed for a work of such magnitude, that they were obliged to carry the earth, which was very scarce, from a considerable distance in the skirts of their coats, or in bags made of shreds and matting.† Yet the fortress was completed within five months, and before the expiration of a year St. Petersburg contained 30,000 houses and huts of different descriptions. So gigantic an undertaking was not accomplished without danger, as well as extreme labour. Peter, who could not be turned aside from his purposes by ordinary obstacles, collected a vast concourse of people from a variety of countries, including Russians, Tartars, Calmucks, Cossacks, Ingrians, and Finlanders; and employed them, without intermission, and without shelter from an inclement climate of sixty degrees of latitude, in deepening the channels of the river, and raising the general level of the islands which

* The foundation stone was laid on the 27th May, 1703.

† Perry's Memoirs on the Present State of Great Russia. Perry served under Peter as a captain of engineers.

were in the winter seasons usually sunk in the floods.* The severity of the labour, and the insufficiency of provisions, caused a great mortality amongst the workmen. A hundred thousand men are said to have perished in the first year.† While this fort was in progress of erection, Peter despatched Menzikoff to a little island lying nearer to the mouth of the river, to build another fortress for the protection of the entrance. The model of the fortress was made by himself in wood. He gave it the name of Cronstadt, which, with the adjacent town and buildings, it still retains. Under the cannon of this impregnable fortress the largest fleet might float in shelter.

The establishment of a new city on so unfavourable a site, and the contemplated removal of the seat of government, received considerable opposition from the boyards and upper classes, as well as from the inferior grades, who regarded the place with terror, in consequence of the mortality it had already produced. The discontent of the lower orders broke out in loud complaints during Peter's temporary absence. They gathered in great crowds round the church, which was the second building erected; and it was declared that the image of the blessed Virgin was seen to shed tears, in pity for their sufferings. This shallow trick of the priests was speedily exposed by the czar, who, on his return, ordered the image to be taken down, and discovered, in the cavities close to the eyes, a few drops of oil, which, by an obvious contrivance, were made to ooze out and trickle over the insensate face of the statue. No measures short of the most despotic could have compelled the inhabitants of Moscow to migrate to the bleak and dismal islands of the Neva, and Peter

* The situation of the capital, except for its commercial advantages, was unfortunately chosen. It is constantly subjected to inundations, which no skill can entirely avert; and so lately as 1824 it suffered severely from the rising of the waters. The public buildings and streets are magnificent in structure, and the majestic Neva flowing through the centre gives it a noble aspect. Mr James describes it as "the fairest city in the world."

† The wooden house in which the czar lived during the time he superintended the works is still preserved by a surrounding wall.

was not slow to carry such measures into effect. If the people could have looked beyond the convenience of the moment into the future prospects of the empire, they must at once have perceived the wisdom of the change. The paramount object of Peter's policy was the internal improvement of Russia. The withdrawal of the nobility, the merchants, and the artisans from their rude capital in the interior, to an imperial seat on the Gulf of Finland, by which they would be brought into closer intercourse with civilised Europe, and acquire increased facilities for commercial enterprise, was evidently calculated to promote that object; which was distinctly kept in view in the place upon which the city was built. Peter had not forgotten the practical lessons he had learned during his residence in Holland. That country, the inhabitants of which in Pliny's time were described to be amphibious, as if it were doubtful to which element, the land or the sea, they really belonged, had been redeemed from the ocean by the activity and skill of the people; and Peter, profiting by their experience, adopted Amsterdam as his model in securing the foundations of St. Petersburg. He employed several Dutch architects and masons; and the wharfs, canals, bridges, and rectilineal streets, planted with rows of trees, attest the accuracy with which the design was accomplished. To a neighbouring island, which he made a depot for timber, he gave the name of New Holland, as if he meant to leave to posterity an acknowledgment of the obligations he owed to that country.

The speculations of the czar were rapidly fulfilled in the commercial relations invited by the establishment of St. Petersburg. Five months had scarcely elapsed from the day of its foundation, when a Dutch ship, freighted with merchandise, stood into the river. Before the expiration of a year, another vessel from Holland arrived; and the third vessel, within the year, that entered the new port, was from England. These gratifying facts inspired confidence amongst those who

had been disposed to look upon the project with such hasty distrust; and Peter, whose power was now rapidly growing up on all sides, was enabled to extend his operations in every direction over Ingria. The variety of affairs which, at this juncture, occupied his attention, sufficiently proves the grasp of his capacity, and the extraordinary energy of his mind. Nearly at the same time that he founded a new capital, he was employed in fortifying Plescow, Novogorod, Kief, Smolensko, Azoph, and Archangel; and in assisting the unfortunate Augustus with men and money. Cornelius de Bruyer, a Dutchman, who at that period was travelling in Holland, states that Peter informed him that, notwithstanding all these undertakings, he had 300,000 roubles remaining in his coffers, after providing for all the charges of the war.*

The advances that the czar was thus making in strengthening and civilising the empire, were regarded with such contempt by Charles, that he is reported to have said that Peter might amuse himself as he thought fit in building a city, as he should soon find him to take it from him, and set fire to his wooden houses. The Porte, however, did not look with indifference upon his movements, and sent an ambassador to him to complain of his preparations; but Peter replied that he was master of his own dominions, as the Porte was of his, and that his object was not to infringe the peace, but to render Russia "respectable" upon the Euxine.†

The time was now approaching when the decision of the disputes in Poland enabled Charles to turn back upon Ingria, where Peter was making so successful a stand. On the 14th of February, 1704, the primate of Warsaw threw off his allegiance to Augustus, who was in due form deposed by the diet. The nomination of the new king was placed in the hands of Charles, who proposed Stanislaus Lescinsky, a young nobleman distinguished for his accomplishments, and who was ac-

* Voltaire. † Ibid.

cordingly declared king of Poland and grand duke of Lithuania. But Lithuania had not as yet sent in her adherence to either side; and Peter, still taking a deep interest in the fortunes of Augustus, whose Saxon troops were every day suffering fresh discomfitures from the Swedish army, sent that monarch a reinforcement of 12,000 men to support his claims in the undecided province. The military force of Russia had now become a formidable body, highly disciplined, and fully equipped; and Peter, without loss of time, in the spring of 1704, disposed the remainder of his army into two divisions, one of which he sent under the command of field-marshal Scheremetoff, to besiege Dorpt, while he took in person the conduct of the other against Narva, where he had formerly endured a signal defeat.

Dorpt, which is better known by this siege than by the university which Gustavus Adolphus had previously established there, was forced to capitulate by a *ruse de guerre*. It was necessary in the first instance to become master of the Lake Peipus, for which purpose a Russian flotilla was placed at the entrance of the Embach. Upon the advance of a Swedish squadron a naval battle ensued, which ended in the capture or destruction of the whole of the enemy's fleet. Peter now sat down before Dorpt, but, finding that the commandant held out for six weeks, he adopted an ingenious device to procure entrance into the town. He disguised two regiments of infantry, and one of cavalry, in the uniforms of Swedish soldiers, giving them Swedish standards and flags. These pretended Swedes attacked the trenches, and the Russians feigned a flight. The garrison of the town, deceived by appearances, made a sortie; when the false attackers and the attacked re-united, fell upon the troops, and entered the town. A great slaughter ensued, and, to save the remainder of the garrison, the commandant surrendered. At Narva Peter was equally successful. The siege was conducted under his own personal command. Sword in hand, he

attacked three bastions that offered the strongest points of defence, carried them all, and burst into the town. The barbarities that ensued were of a nature to revolt even the czar himself. Pillage, slaughter, and lustful excesses were committed by the infuriated men; and Peter, shocked at the cruelties he witnessed, threw himself amongst the barbarians who refused to obey his orders, and slew several of them in the public streets. A number of the unfortunate citizens had taken refuge in the Hotel de Ville; and the czar, appearing in the midst of them, cast his bloody sword on the table, declaring that it was stained, not with the blood of the citizens, but of his own soldiers, which he had shed to save their lives.*

These victories were decisive of the position of Peter. He was now master of all Ingria, the government of which he conferred upon Menzikoff, whom he created a prince of the empire and major-general in the army. The elevation of Menzikoff, through the various grades of the service, from his humble situation as a pastry-cook's boy to the highest dignities in the state, was a practical reproof to the indolent and ignorant nobility, who were now taught to feel that merit was the only recommendation to the favour of the czar. The old system of promotion was closed. The claims of birth and the pride of station ceased to possess any influence at court. The great body of the people, impressed with the justice that dictated this important change in the dispensation of honour and rewards, began for the first

* Stæhlin says, that when count de Horn, the governor of Narva, was brought as a prisoner before Peter, the czar darted forward, struck him on the face, and exclaimed, "It is you, and you only, who are the cause of so many calamities. Ought you not to have capitulated when you had no hope of assistance?" Stæhlin, from whom this characteristic fact is derived, was a member of the Academy of Sciences at Petersburg about ten years after the death of Peter. He was also tutor, and afterwards librarian, to the great duke Peter Feodorovitch; and being much mixed up with persons of distinction about the court, he was enabled to collect a variety of anecdotes concerning the czar, which he afterwards published. They chiefly concern the private life of the monarch, and do not legitimately come within the range of history; but they occasionally serve to confirm traits of character, and to throw unexpected light upon some incidents in the public proceedings of Peter. They are, for the most part, authenticated by the names of the persons upon whose authority they are stated.

time to be inspired with a spirit of emulation and activity; and exactly in proportion as Peter forfeited the attachment of the few, whose power was daily on the decline, he drew around him the mixed wonder and allegiance of the many, whose power he was daily enlarging. Thus were laid the foundations of a mighty empire in the hearts of a scattered population, as various in habits and in language as it had always been discordant in interests and disunited in action.

Having acquired this valuable possession, and secured himself in St. Petersburg against the Swedes, it was the profound policy of Peter to keep up the war between Charles and Augustus, with a view to weaken by diversion the strength of the former. He accordingly made a great offer of assistance to the dethroned king, and despatched general Repuin with 6000 horse and 6000 foot to the borders of Lithuania; while he advanced in person into Courland at the head of a strong force. Here he received a severe check, having fallen in with the Swedish general Lewenhauft, who defeated the Russians after an obstinate battle, in which the czar's troops lost between 5000 and 6000 men, and the Swedes no more than 2000. Peter, notwithstanding, penetrated into Courland, and laid siege to the capital, which surrendered by capitulation. On this occasion the Swedes degraded themselves by committing an extensive pillage in the palace and archives of the dukes of Courland, descending even into the mausoleums to rob the dead of their jewels. The Russians, however, before they would take charge of the vaults, made a Swedish colonel sign a certificate that their sacrilegious depredations were the acts of his own countrymen.

The greatest part of Courland, as well as the whole of Ingria, had now been conquered in detail by Peter, and, as Charles was still engrossed by his operations in Poland and Saxony, he returned to Moscow to pass the winter; but intelligence of the approach of the Swedish king at the head of a powerful force towards Grodno, where the combined armies of Russia and Saxony were encamped,

recalled him from his repose. Peter immediately hastened to the field, and found all the avenues occupied by Swedish troops. A battle ensued near Frauenstadt, in which the flower of the confederated battalions, under the command of general Schullemberg, to the number of 18,000 men, 6000 of whom were Russians, suffered a complete defeat. With an insignificant exception, they were nearly all slain. Some authorities attribute this disaster to the treachery of a French regiment, which had the care of the Saxon artillery; but it is certain that the most sanguinary atrocities were committed on both sides, in a contest upon the issue of which two crowns appeared to be dependent. The consequences of this overthrow would have been immediately fatal to Augustus, but for the energy of the czar, who rapidly organising an army of 20,000 men, urged that wavering prince to take advantage of the absence of Charles in Saxony, and throw himself once more into Poland. A revolt in Astracan called Peter into that part of his territories; but he deputed general Patkul, a brave Livonian, who had formerly made his escape from the hands of Charles, and had passed from the service of Augustus into that of the czar, to explain the necessity of the measure. Augustus yielded to the advice of his ally, and marched into Poland; but he had no sooner made good his progress, than, suddenly panic-struck by the increasing successes of Charles, he resolved to sue for peace upon any terms at which it could be procured. He accordingly invested two ambassadors with full powers to treat confidentially with Charles, and had the temerity to cast Patkul into prison. While the plenipotentiaries were negotiating this shameful treaty at the camp of Charles XII., Menzikoff joined the forces of Augustus at Kalich with 30,000 men. The consternation of Augustus at this unexpected reinforcement was indescribable; and his confusion amounted almost to despair upon the receipt of intelligence that 10,000 Swedes, under the command of general Meyerfeldt, were on their march to give him battle. In this dilemma he trans-

mitted a private message to general Meyerfeldt to inform him of the negotiation he had opened with his master; but that general, naturally treating the whole affair as a mere pretext to gain time, made preparations for hostilities. The superior force of the Russians decided the fate of the day, and, after having defeated the Swedes with great slaughter, they entered Warsaw in triumph. Had Augustus relied upon the energy and friendship of his ally, he would now have been replaced upon his throne; but the timidity that tempted him to cast himself upon the mercy of Charles was prolific of misfortunes. He had scarcely entered Warsaw as a victor when he was met by his own plenipotentiaries, who placed before him the treaty they had just concluded, by which he had forfeited the crown of Poland for ever. His humiliation was complete. Thus the weak and vacillating Augustus, fresh from a triumph that ought to have placed him upon the throne of Poland, was a vassal in its capital, while Charles was giving the law in Leipsic, and reigning in his lost electorate.

His struggles to escape from the disgrace into which his folly and his fears had plunged him, only drew down fresh contempt upon his head. He wrote to Charles a letter of explanation and apology, in which he begged pardon for having obtained a victory against his will, protesting that it was entirely the act of the Russians, whom it was his full intention to have abandoned, in conformity with the wishes of Charles, and assuring that monarch, that he would do any thing in his power to render him satisfaction for the great wrong he had committed in daring to beat his troops. Not content with this piece of humility, and fearing to remain at Warsaw, he proceeded to Saxony, and, in the heart of his own dominions, where the members of his family were fugitives, he surrendered in person to the victorious Swede. Charles was too conscious of his advantages not to avail himself of them to the full, and not only made the timid Augustus fulfil all the stipulations of the treaty, by which he renounced the crown of Poland,

abandoned his alliance with the czar, surrendered the Swedish prisoners, and gave up all the deserters, including general Patkul, whom Augustus had arrested by a violation of good faith, but he forced him to write a letter to Stanislaus, congratulating him on his accession to the throne. The unfortunate Patkul was no sooner delivered into the hands of Charles, than he condemned him to be broken on the wheel and quartered, writing the iniquitous sentence with his own hand.* This single act, which was contrary to all principles of justice and international law, reflects indelible dishonour upon the name of Charles XII. Patkul, as the ambassador and general of the czar of Russia, possessed a personal indemnity that, agreeably to the usages of all civilised nations, ought to have protected him from violence. As a native of Livonia, he was free to choose his masters, and embrace the cause that appeared to him most strongly fortified by truth and virtue. His execution was as illegal as it was inhuman, and must always be considered as a blot upon the military glory of the king of Sweden.†

The timid and treacherous conduct of Augustus, and the deliberate cruelty of Charles, drew from Peter expressions of unbounded indignation. He laid a statement of the whole circumstances before the principal potentates of Europe, and declared his determination to use all the means in his power to drive Stanislaus from the throne of Poland. The first measure he adopted

* This fact is asserted on the authority of the chaplain Norberg

† The original crime which the unhappy Patkul committed, and for which he ultimately perished at the hands of Charles XII, was in heading a deputation of Livonians, who were delegated by their countrymen to represent to that monarch certain grievances under which they laboured. The zeal and eloquence of Patkul pleased Charles so much, that he even praised him for his honourable devotion to the interests of his country; yet in a day or two afterwards he publicly denounced him as a traitor. Finding himself thus deceived, and exposed to imminent danger, Patkul effected his escape, and joined Augustus. He subsequently went into the service of the czar It is said that when Charles demanded that he should be delivered up to him, Augustus, afraid of the vengeance of Peter, offered to assist him to escape from the dungeons of Konigstein, to which he had himself consigned him; but that Patkul, relying on the law of nations and the good faith of Augustus, refused to accept his liberty on the mercenary terms proposed to him by the governor of the castle. During the delay thus occasioned, a party of Swedes arrived, and carried him away by force to head-quarters at Alt-Ranstadt, where he was afterwards put to death.

was the holding of a conference with several of the Polish grandees, whom he completely gained over to his side by the suavity of his manners. At a subsequent meeting it was agreed that the throne of Poland was in fact vacant, and that a diet should be summoned for the purpose of electing a king. When the diet assembled, Peter urged upon their attention the peculiar circumstances in which the country was placed, and the impossibility of effecting any substantial resistance against the ambitious intrigues of Charles, unless a new king were placed upon the throne. His views were confirmed by the voice of the assembly, who agreed to the public declaration of an interregnum, and to the investiture of the primate in the office of regent until the election should have taken place. But while these proceedings were going forward at Lublin, king Stanislaus, who had been previously acknowledged by most of the sovereigns of Europe, was advancing into Poland at the head of sixteen Swedish regiments, and was received with regal honours in all the places through which he passed. Nor was this the only danger that threatened to arrest the course of the proposed arrangements for the settlement of the troubles of Poland. Charles, whose campaign in Saxony had considerably enriched his treasury, was now prepared to take the field with a well-disciplined army of 45,000 men *, besides the force commanded by general Lewenhauft; and he did not affect to conceal his intention to make Russia the theatre of war, in which purpose he was strengthened by an offer on the part of the Porte to enter into an offensive alliance with him against Peter, whose interference in the affairs of Poland excited great jealousy and alarm in Turkey. Charles calculated in some degree upon the support he might receive from the Russians themselves, who, he believed, would be easily induced to revolt against Peter, in consequence of the innovations he had introduced, and the expenses that he would be likely to entail upon them by

* This estimate is taken from Voltaire. Other authorities increase the number to 50,000 men.

a protracted war. But the people of Russia were well aware that mere personal ambition did not enter into the schemes of Peter, and that, although he had broken through many antiquated and reverend customs, yet that he had conferred such permanent benefits upon the empire as entitled him to their lasting gratitude. Whatever prospects of success, therefore, Charles might have flattered himself upon deriving from the dissatisfaction of the great mass of the community, were evidently vague and visionary. But the argument was sufficient for all his purposes in helping to inspire his soldiers with confidence. About this time the French envoy at the court of Saxony attempted to effect a reconciliation between Charles and the czar, when the former made his memorable reply that he would treat with Peter in Moscow; which answer being conveyed to Peter produced his equally memorable commentary — "My brother Charles wishes to play the part of Alexander, but he shall not find a Darius in me."

Rapid preparations were made on both sides for the war which had now become inevitable. In the autumn of 1707 Charles commenced his march from Alt-Raustadt, paying a visit to Augustus at Dresden as he passed through that city*, and hastening onwards through Poland, where his soldiers committed such devastations that the peasantry rose in arms against them. He finally fixed his winter quarters in Lithuania. During the time occupied by these movements, Peter was wintering at Moscow, where, after an absence of two years, he had been received with universal demonstrations of affection. He was busily occupied in inspecting the new manufactories that had been established in the capital, when news reached him of the operations of the Swedish army. He immediately departed, and, with

* Voltaire expresses some surprise that Charles would trust himself in the hands of a prince whom he had deprived of his kingdom. But this visit, extraordinary as it undoubtedly appears, — for Charles went into the city of Dresden attended only by three or four officers, — was not altogether incapable of explanation. His risk was at least trifling, followed, as he was, by a powerful army; and it would seem that his whole object was to gratify his ostentatious love of display.

600 of the guards, established his head-quarters in the city of Grodno. Charles no sooner heard of his arrival at that place than, with his usual impetuosity, he hastened forwards with only 800 men to besiege the town. By a mistake, the life of Peter was nearly sacrificed. A German officer, who commanded the gate towards which Charles approached, imagining that the whole Swedish army was advancing, fled from his post, and left the passage open to the enemy. General consternation prevailed throughout the city as the rumour spread; and the victorious Charles, cutting in pieces the few Russians who ventured to contest his progress, made himself master of the town. The czar, impressed with the belief that the report was true, retreated behind the ramparts, and effected his escape through a gate at which Charles had placed a guard. Some jesuits, whose house, being the best in the town, was taken for the use of Charles, contrived in the course of the night to inform Peter of the real circumstances; upon which the czar re-entered the city, forced the Swedish guard, and contended for possession in the streets. But the approach of the Swedish army compelled him at last to retire, and to leave Grodno in the hands of the conqueror.

The advance of the Swedes was now marked by a succession of triumphs; and Peter, finding that Charles was resolved to pursue him, and that the invader had but 500 miles to traverse to the capital, an interval unprotected by any places of consequence, with the exception of Smolensko, conceived a masterly plan for drawing him into a part of the country where he could obtain neither magazines nor subsistence for his army, nor, in case of necessity, secure a safe retreat. With this design he withdrew to the right bank of the Dnieper *, where he established himself behind sheltered lines, from which he might attack the enemy at an advantage, preserving to himself a free communication with Smolensko, and abundant means of retreat over a country that yielded plentiful resources for his

* The ancient Borysthenes.

troops. In order to render this measure the more certain, he despatched general Goltz at the head of 15,000 men to join a body of 12,000 Cossacks, with strict orders to lay waste the whole province for a circle of thirty miles, and then to rejoin the czar at the position he had taken up on the bank of the Dnieper. This bold movement was executed as swiftly as it was planned: and the Swedes, reduced to immediate extremity for want of forage, were compelled to canton their army until the following May. Accustomed, however, to the reverses of war, they were not daunted by danger or fatigue: but it was no longer doubtful that both parties were on the eve of decisive events. They regarded the future, however, with very different hopes. Charles, heated with victories, and panting for further acquisitions, surveyed the vast empire, upon the borders of which he now hung like a cloud, as if it were already within his grasp; while Peter, more wary and self-possessed, conscious of the magnitude of the stake for which he fought, and aware of the great difficulties of his situation, occupied himself in making provision against the worst.

CHAP. IV.

RELATIVE STRENGTH OF THE ARMIES. — ERRORS IN THE POLICY OF CHARLES. — HE TURNS HIS STEPS TO THE UKRAINE, LURED BY THE PROMISES OF MAZEPPA. — A SECTION OF THE SWEDES DEFEATED BY THE RUSSIANS. — MISERABLE SITUATION AND OBSTINACY OF CHARLES. — HIS WANDERINGS IN THE UKRAINE. — HIS ARMY REACHES THE VORSKLA. — BATTLE OF PULTOWA. — CHARLES FLIES TO TURKEY. — FURTHER SUCCESSES OVER THE SWEDES. — RESULTS OF THE BATTLE OF PULTOWA. — INTRIGUES IN TURKEY. — WAR WITH THE SULTAN. — ADVANCE INTO TURKEY. — PERILOUS SITUATION OF THE RUSSIAN TROOPS ON THE PRUTH. — HEROISM OF CATHERINE. — PETER CAPITULATES. — TREATY WITH TURKEY. — DOMESTIC TROUBLES OF THE CZAR. — PRINCE ALEXIS.

THE numerical strength of the Russian army was greater than that of the Swedish. It consisted altogether of nearly 100,000 men: of these about 38,000 were composed of infantry, and the same number of cavalry; 20,000 Cossacks, and 6000 Calmucks. They were for the most part effective troops, and tolerably well disciplined. The Swedes, on the other hand, reckoned a force of about 80,000 men; consisting of 79 squadrons, 61 battalions of dragoons, and 101 of infantry. But they were so much better skilled in the art of war, that the actual advantage lay at their side. It is probable that if Peter had not been conscious of their superiority in the field, he would at once have brought the struggle to issue in an open battle, possessing a force so much more numerous than that of the enemy; but he was well aware that his only chance of success lay in the security of his position, and in the means it was in his power to employ for harassing Charles. By such measures he hoped to exhaust his resources, and ultimately to drive him from the frontiers.

On the 25th of June, 1708, the first action of any

consequence took place. The impetuous Swedes, coming up with a division of the Russians under the command of general Goltz, who had just been reinforced by two additional corps on the banks of the Berezina, attacked them with a large body of cavalry. After a desperate conflict, which lasted for several hours, the Swedes were repulsed with an enormous loss. It was anticipated that Charles would now push on towards Moscow; but Peter had already taken his precautions, and laid waste the whole country between the Dnieper and Smolensko, which was the direct line to the capital. The czar, unwilling to hazard a general engagement, contented himself with sending out small detachments, after the usage of the Cossacks, to divert and perplex the enemy; and in these skirmishes the Russians generally retreated, leaving such desolation on their track as to render the pursuit an undertaking of considerable difficulty. But Charles, who never paused to reflect upon the dangers by which he was immediately surrounded, or the more imminent perils that lay before him, still followed up his march in the direct road to the capital, finding the country wasted and depopulated as he advanced. He had already approached within a short distance of Smolensko before he allowed himself to believe that he had miscalculated upon the disaffection of the people, and the facilities of the enterprise: nor would he have even then admitted his mistake, had he not been tempted to embrace a different course, that seemed to promise unexpected advantages. But it was only exchanging one fallacy for another. He had already committed two fatal errors in dealing with Russia. His first was the postponement of his descent upon the empire, and his second was the adoption of a route thickly strewn with obstacles of a worse kind than any he had yet encountered. He had now to suffer the penalty of his oversight and imprudence.

Exhausted by famine and fatigue, the Swedes drooped in the pursuit, when Charles suddenly turned his steps towards the barren wastes and inhospitable deserts of

the Ukraine. A movement so wild and extraordinary astonished the czar, who knew that in that vast and desolate region the army of Sweden could obtain neither succour nor provender; and that the country was defended by 30,000 Cossacks, under the command of hetman Mazeppa, whose fidelity he had then no reason to question. The mystery, however, was soon cleared up by the discovery that Mazeppa, stung by some imaginary slight, or actuated by a desire to accomplish the separate independence of the Ukraine, had treacherously entered into a private negotiation with Charles, and promised him the voluntary support of his followers. Charles, taking counsel only of himself, rashly embraced the proposal, without staying to inquire whether Mazeppa possessed the power of realising his dazzling promises. Peter saw very clearly the error into which Charles had fallen, and that it required only a patient and steady course of proceeding on his part to turn it to the best advantage. Instead, therefore, of coming to a collision with the main body of the Swedes, he allowed them to turn off upon their hopeless march, and directed all his energies to prevent a junction between the king and general Lewenhaupt, who, at the head of a powerful force, was endeavouring to join his master. General Bauer hung upon his rear, and continually harassed his advance; and Lewenhaupt, after traversing a ruined tract of country, at last found himself, in the month of October, surrounded by 50,000 or 60,000 Russians commanded by the czar in person. His perilous situation inspired his troops with the valour of despair, and, falling upon the Russian outposts, he put a considerable body of their infantry to flight. Peter was so incensed at this circumstance, that he ordered a number of Calmucks and Cossacks, the most ferocious of the soldiery, to occupy the lines, with positive injunctions to sabre every man who should attempt to break the ranks, even including himself, should he betray such cowardice. Lewenhaupt slowly advanced by forced marches over a rugged country; interrupted by strag-

gling forests and forlorn marshes; but the Russians followed so close upon him, that he at last turned and made preparations for a pitched battle, upon the result of which alone he calculated for safety. In this affair the loss of the Swedes was tremendous: half their forces were left upon the field. The next day the battle became general, and was renewed with increased fury. The intrepidity exhibited by the czar upon this occasion infused unbounded enthusiasm throughout the army. He moved continually from one part of the line to another, directing the fire, and animating the soldiers by the fearlessness of his example. The conflict was maintained until nightfall, when the Swedes fell behind the shelter of their numerous baggage-waggons, where they continued to keep up watch-fires until the dawn of day. The Russians remained under arms throughout the night; and at daybreak, when they advanced to renew the attack, it was discovered that Lewenhaupt had made good his retreat under cover of the darkness, leaving the wounded and 7000 waggons, containing the provisions destined for the use of the royal army, behind him. This was the first great victory achieved by the Russians over the Swedes, and it was as important in its ultimate consequences, as it was appalling in the amount of immediate loss it entailed upon the enemy. The total loss of the Swedes amounted to no less than 8000 men; while that of the Russians was little more than 1200, killed and wounded. The further loss of their cannon, their military chest, and the provisions destined for the succour of the king, completed the discomfiture of that unfortunate division of the Swedish army. General Lewenhaupt, escaping with the shattered remnant of his force, scarcely reckoning 4000 men, fled to the river Sissa, which he was compelled to swim to join his master at Staradub, on the Desna.

The situation of Charles was in the last degree deplorable. Insulated from all means of assistance, he waited in vain for the promised reinforcement from Mazeppa, who at last appeared just as the king had

abandoned all hope of succour. But, instead of coming to him at the head of those fierce battalions he had led him to expect, he approached rather as a fugitive than as an ally, drawing after him two miserable regiments, that stood in as much need of help as the wasted Swedes themselves. The causes of the defection were easily explained. Mazeppa had proffered the aid of the Cossacks before he had consulted their inclinations, and he had no sooner revealed to them the treachery he contemplated against their sovereign, than they deserted him, and returned to their homes. In these disastrous circumstances, the only alternative that presented itself to the mind of the disappointed hetman was to strengthen a solitary fortress situated near the forests of the Desna, by which he proposed to impede the progress of the Russians, and cause a diversion of their troops. But the genius of Peter was beforehand with him. The czar had already reduced the last hold of the deserter to ashes, broken some of his most daring accomplices on the wheel, and elected, in the person of John Skoropatsky, a new hetman in his place.

Overwhelmed by these accumulating misfortunes, baffled in all his plans, and disappointed in every quarter, Charles was forced, in the midst of a severe winter, to traverse a country that had been desolated by the hand of war, and where it was impossible to procure sustenance for his troops. The victorious soldiers with whom he had carried destruction through the fields of Poland and Lithuania, and pursued the flying Russians almost within sight of the fortifications of Smolensko, were reduced to about 25,000 men, including the surviving fragments of the divisions of Lewenhaupt, and the whole force mustered by Mazeppa. This skeleton of an army, whose banners had hitherto floated over countless fields of conquest, was destined to struggle against an inclement season, rendered still more rigid by the marshes through which it was necessary to pass, the insufficiency of their clothing, and the want of provisions. Half naked and half famished, numbers of them perished

by the way; but such was the obstinacy of Charles, that he rejected the advice of his councillors, who strongly urged him to halt in a small town of the Ukraine, in the hope of procuring a temporary supply for the soldiers. His able and judicious minister, count Piper, represented to him the necessity as well as prudence of retracing his steps to Poland, where measures were in progress for the deposition of king Stanislaus; but Charles was infatuated by his new scheme of subjugating the Ukraine, and marching direct upon Moscow. He relied solely upon his valour and the fame of his victories. He counted nothing upon the impediments by which he was beset, but, as if he believed that he wielded a destiny at once fatal and irresistible, he resolved to persevere against a combination of circumstances which human sagacity could not overcome.

The intense cold of the winter obliged both armies to remain inactive. But, while the Swedes were shut up in the barren wilds, the Russians possessed the advantage of having a fertile country to fall back upon for subsistence. Their relative positions were consequently very different; and Peter, who was recruiting his strength during the inclement months, knew that the enemy were suffering from the extremity of want. They ravaged the Ukraine for a considerable distance round their encampment, pillaging the peasantry, and spreading ruin wherever they appeared; but the czar did not interfere with their movements, being aware that the longer they were exposed to such necessity the more their strength must be reduced. It would appear that, in the exercise of a wilful spirit, which was unwarned by a succession of disasters, and unrestrained by ordinary checks, Charles at last became incapable of regulating with common discretion the measures which were necessary even for the accomplishment of his own designs. As soon as the winter began to break up, he moved across the Ukraine in a south-easterly direction, until he plunged into the sandy deserts lying westward

of the territory of the don Cossacks. Finding, when it was too late, either that he had mistaken the route, or miscalculated upon the nature of the country, he turned to retrace his journey over the districts which he had just laid waste on his advance. Without guide, shelter, or provisions, and constantly exposed to the vengeance of the infuriated peasantry into whose poor homesteads he had carried slaughter and desolation, he lost three months in marching and counter-marching through bleak and dismal solitudes; his numbers diminishing every day, until at last, in the month of May, he reached the small fortified town of Pultowa, on the banks of the Vorskla, which was garrisoned by the Russians. The position of Pultowa, which commands many mountain passes communicating with the main road to Moscow, was of importance to both parties; and, although Peter had prepared for its defence, anticipating the probable course that Charles would take, it was not at this moment sufficiently strong to hold out against a protracted siege. The remnant of the Swedish army, which lay down before the batteries of Pultowa, amounted to about 18,000 men; but Peter, obtaining intelligence of the movements of the enemy, hastened to the defence of the place, and arrived there on the 15th of June, 1709, at the head of an army of between 50,000 and 60,000 men. His first object was to reinforce the garrison; and, detaching Menzikoff with a small corps to make a feint, he drew the besiegers out of their trenches, and, taking advantage of the circumstance, poured fresh troops into the town. Upon perceiving the results of this manœuvre, Charles is reported to have exclaimed, "I see well that we have taught the Muscovites the art of war."

The acknowledgment was not more flattering than just. Peter's army was well disciplined, and possessed great advantages over the enemy. It was provided with all the necessary requisites for a campaign, and was commanded by able generals. Having crossed the river with his whole force, he drew a long intrenchment,

which was begun and finished in a single night, opposite the enemy's lines. Then posting his cavalry between two woods, and covering them with several redoubts strongly fortified with artillery, he made immediate preparations to open the attack. The disposition of his troops was skilfully chosen. They occupied two long lines between the Dnieper and the Vorskla, forming an angle at their junction into which it was anticipated the Swedes would be driven.

While these measures were in progress, several skirmishes took place under the walls of the city, in one of which Charles received a wound in his foot, which obliged him to submit to a painful operation, and kept him confined for some days. But this accident did not impair his spirit. He resolved to anticipate the meditated movements of the Russians, and, ordering his army out of their entrenchments, he commenced a vigorous attack on the redoubts. The Russians met the charge with steadiness, but were compelled to yield at two points, which were carried by the Swedes sword in hand.* This, however, did not affect the position of the czar's army, upon which the Swedes utterly failed to make any impression. The right wing was commanded by general Bauer, the left by prince Menzikoff, and the centre by field-marshal Scherematoff, the czar himself acting as major-general. Throughout the battle, the two sovereigns were to be seen flying along the lines, directing and encouraging the soldiers, and exposing themselves to the most imminent personal danger. Charles was carried in his litter, which was destroyed under him by a cannon ball, that killed one of the bearers. Another conveyance was immediately provided; the king, in the interim, being raised on the pikes of his men to superintend the operations. Peter's clothes, hat, and saddle were pierced by several shots, and three horses were killed during the action under prince Menzikoff. For two hours the battle raged with the utmost fury, and at

* Norberg denies this fact, and calls it a calumny; but his authority is questionable.

last the Swedes gave way. Their troops fell into confusion, and the victory became at once easy and decided. The slaughter that ensued was dreadful. The loss on the side of the Swedes was estimated at 9224, besides the prisoners; while the loss of the Russians was comparatively trifling. Several general officers fell into the hands of the Russians, and were treated by Peter with distinction and respect. The unfortunate Charles, seeing that the day was lost, fled with precipitation, and, reaching Bender on the Dneister with a remnant of his troops, exhibited so much obstinacy in refusing to write to the grand vizier, agreeably to the custom of the country, that he became a refugee in Turkey, under circumstances so dispiriting and humiliating, that it is difficult to reconcile the folly which produced his misfortunes with those more dazzling traits of character for which he is celebrated.

It is stated, on the single authority of a minister of the court of Peter, that the czar, on learning that Charles contemplated a retreat into Turkey, wrote to him, conjuring him not to take that desperate resolution, and pledging himself not to hold him prisoner, but to terminate their differences by a reasonable peace. The letter containing this offer was sent after Charles to the river Bog, which divides the deserts of the Ukraine from the country of the grand seignior; but when this arrived there, Charles had already entered Turkey. This statement is not to be found in the journal of the czar, nor in any of the authentic memoirs of the time; but it is nevertheless entitled to some credit, as being at least extremely probable.

On the evening of the day of the battle of Pultowa, a body of the Russian troops were sent in pursuit of the force under the command of general Lewenhaupt; and, coming up with them at Perewolockna, on the right bank of the Dnieper, prince Menzikoff summoned them to surrender. Lewenhaupt, too well assured of the disadvantages of his situation, immediately submitted, and signed a treaty, to which his whole force,

amounting to about 14,000 men, were declared prisoners of war; and all the artillery, provisions, and munitions of the army were given up to the conquerors. Nearly the whole of this body were immediately sent into Siberia, to colonise a wild and, at that time, uninhabited tract of country. Peter has been blamed by some of his biographers for the severity of this measure; but the amount of benefit it entailed upon the empire, in the improvements which the constrained colonists introduced into that barren region, suggests the best answer to such objections. The blame rests rather upon Charles for undertaking so rash an expedition, by which so many thousands of his subjects perished in the field, or were banished for ever from their country.

Thus terminated the war between these formidable rivals, throughout the whole conduct of which the firmness and forethought of Peter appear to the greatest advantage in contrast to the recklessness and impetuosity of Charles. It was evident that Charles had miscalculated his means, and that, despising the talents and resources of the enemy, he suffered himself to be drawn into difficulties, out of which it was impossible to escape with credit. The battle of Pultowa was of the utmost importance in its results, not merely to Russia, but to the whole of Europe. On the one hand, an arrogant monarch, who had already carried fire and sword into Poland and Denmark, and the Saxon states, who had successively dictated terms in three different capitals, dethroned one prince, and appointed another, and whose object was the mere glory of conquest in its least worthy acceptation, advanced at the head of victorious multitudes, to invade the dominions of a sovereign whose life was dedicated less to territorial aggrandisement than to the promotion of domestic amelioration and commercial prosperity: while, on the other, a wise legislator, who was employed in raising his people out of a state of barbaric ignorance to a level with European knowledge and refinement, was called upon to vindicate his rights on the frontiers of his own country against an enemy

whose designs were opposed not only to the liberties, but to the civilisation, of mankind. Had Charles succeeded, the moral culture of Russia must have been thrown back to an indefinite period, and northern despotism must at once have taken up a position from which it could not have been dislodged before incalculable evils had been precipitated within the great sphere of its influence. The interests of good government were involved in the success of the czar. He was the minister of a mighty change, which depended upon his own personal exertions, and the direct authority of his reputation. Had he failed at the field of Pultowa, or had the arms of Russia even been triumphant at the cost of his life, the empire must have undergone a new revolution, to become again the prey of civil war and feudal convulsions.*

Although Russia entered originally upon the war by her own voluntary act, yet, the objects proposed by Peter being in their nature strictly defensible, the Swedish invasion cannot be regarded otherwise than as a wanton and dangerous aggression, undertaken with a view to extend the power of an ambitious monarch. The recovery of Ingria and Carelia was a legitimate purpose, and afforded a sufficient ground for embarking in hostilities. But its utility to the Russians was so evident, that it would appear to be justified upon principles which all other countries have not hesitated to adopt on similar occasions. The geographical situation of these provinces, presenting a direct road to the shores of the Baltic, must, at a later period, have exposed them to an incursion from their powerful neighbour; and if Peter had not conceived

* Colonel de Lacy Evans, in his admirable work entitled "The Designs of Russia," speaks of the battle of Pultowa as an event "which Europe has to deplore," but, it may be taken for granted that, on a little reflection, he would be induced to revise his opinion. When colonel Evans published that essay the ambitious objects of Russia were beginning to be detected, and it was then, as it is now, necessary to the security of nations to warn the European states of the spirit of aggrandisement that guided the councils of St Petersburgh. In his desire to develope the views of Russia in full, colonel Evans appears to have overlooked all other considerations, and to have exaggerated unconsciously the history and influences of the past, in his justifiable anxiety to point out the probable dangers of the future.

the design of annexing them to Russia, his successors would have been forced to attempt their subjugation, as the increasing prosperity of the empire rendered their possession the more necessary and important.

The effect which this victory produced was felt in the remotest parts of Europe. Charles was a fugitive in Turkey, and Peter lost no time in turning to account the disasters that on all sides beset his opponent. The people of Sweden (who for some time believed that their king was dead), of Poland, of Saxony, and of Silesia, were severally interested in the defeat of the unfortunate monarch. The Saxons demanded revenge for the insults and injuries that had been inflicted upon their elector, who now, protesting against the abdication that was extorted from him, resolved to make an effort to recover the throne of Poland. The senate of Sweden, ignorant of the actual state of affairs, betrayed an uncertainty of purpose that appeared to favour this design, which was rapidly accomplished by the interference of Peter. A treaty was entered into by Poland, Prussia, and Denmark, which restored to those states the conquests of Gustavus Adolphus, and to Russia her sovereignty over her ancient possessions of Livonia, Ingria, and a part of Finland. When these preliminaries were settled, Peter went in person to make a defensive treaty with the elector of Brandenburgh, the first king of Prussia; a mode of negotiation unusual amongst sovereigns, but which was perfectly consistent with the individual character and promptitude of the czar. Having concluded these important plans, he proceeded to reduce some Swedish fortresses, and to bombard the town of Riga, the capital of Livonia, where he lost between 9000 and 10,000 men by a pestilence that was then raging in that place The garrison, struck down by two enemies—the plague and the Russians, and scarcely able to decide which was the more fatal, speedily capitulated; and Livonia was once more rendered tributary to Muscovy.

In the meanwhile Charles was employing all his interest at Constantinople to prevail upon the sultan to

undertake a war against Russia, which the sultan was easily induced to embrace, in consequence of the ravages committed by the Muscovite troops on the frontiers of Turkey, and the rapidly extending power of the czar on the Palus-Mæotis and the Black Sea. The khan of the Crimean Tartars naturally regarded with apprehension the Russian establishment at Asoph, which the Turks had been forced to surrender a few years before; and he, therefore, strengthened the arguments that were submitted to the divan to persuade them into a declaration of hostilities against the common enemy. A statement setting forth the formidable advances that Russia was making in her navy on the Don, and in the harbour of Tangaroc, and of the spirit of acquisition she was constantly exhibiting in her encroachments upon the border lands, was laid before the council by Poniatowski, the active friend of the Swedish king, and was immediately assented to by the mufti. In order to render the views of the sultan still more impressive, count Tolstoy, the czar's ambassador at Constantinople, was arrested in the public streets, and committed to the Castle of the Seven Towers.

The indignity offered to Peter in the person of his minister was scarcely necessary to inflame his irritable temper. Within a short space of time his plenipotentiary in Saxony was broken on the wheel, and his ambassador in London imprisoned for debt; but these events had taken place before the battle of Pultowa, which suddenly elevated him to the highest consideration amongst contemporary sovereigns. The insult, therefore, which the sultan cast upon him by the arrest of count Tolstoy was the more acutely felt, as it appeared to treat him with contempt in the very hour of victory. He soon made the necessary arrangements for the approaching war, sending one division of his army to Moldavia, another to Livonia; and fleets to Asoph, the Baltic, and the Black Sea. It was necessary, however, to return to Moscow to make provision for the government during his absence, and while he was there

he issued a conscription for the purpose of recruiting his army. The time was now arrived for acknowledging before his subjects his marriage with Catherine, which had taken place privately in 1707*; and accordingly, on the 6th of March, 1711, the czarina Catherine Alexina was solemnly declared to be his legitimate wife. The ascendancy which Catherine had acquired over him was not more extraordinary than it was propitious. Peter's disposition was naturally impatient and cruel, and when he was excited to acts of severity he could not be restrained by any appeal to his reason or his humanity. The only influence that possessed any permanent power over him was that of female society; and the remarkably sweet temper of Catherine, who was never known to be out of humour†, invariably tranquillised him, even in his most angry moods: so complete was the fascination she exercised over his mind, that the agony of those spasmodic fits to which he was subject yielded to her soothing presence. Without forgetting the low condition from which she sprang, she maintained the pomp of majesty with irreproachable propriety, and united an air of ease and authority that excited the admiration of those by whom she was surrounded.‡ She was not distinguished by that lofty beauty which would seem to sympathise with these august qualities; nor was she either very brilliant in conversation, nor of a very quick imagination: but she was graceful and animated; her features were pretty and expressive, and a tone of good sense and kindness always pervaded her actions. She was admirably formed for the sphere she embellished, and, above all, for the peculiar necessities of the era that called her to the throne. Her devotion to Peter was boundless: she constantly attended him, even upon occasions of the utmost danger, and especially upon this eventful expedition, when she accompanied him upon his campaign into Turkey.

* Voltaire. † Gordon's History of Peter the Great.
‡ Coxe's Travels in Russia.

The whole body of troops which the precautions of the czar had enabled him to collect amounted to 130,000 men*; but, being distributed in different quarters, and failing to join the czar on the Pruth, as he expected, he was obliged to proceed with an army that fell short of 40,000 men. The perils of the enterprise were so apparent, that Peter issued orders requiring the women who followed in the train of the army to return: but Catherine, who insisted upon remaining with the czar, prevailed upon him to retract his determination. This slight circumstance eventually proved to be the salvation of the czar and his empire.

From Sorokat the army proceeded to Jassy, where Peter was led to expect supplies from the prince of Wallachia, with whom he had entered into a secret negotiation; but the sultan, warned of the prince's intended revolt, suddenly deposed him, and appointed Cantimir in his place. But Cantimir, who was a Christian prince, was no less inclined to assist the czar, and proffered him such aid as he could command; admitting very candidly, however, that his subjects were attached to the Porte, and firm in their allegiance. In this extremity Peter found himself at the head of a very inadequate force in the heart of a wild and rugged country, where the herbage was destroyed by swarms of locusts, and where it was impossible to procure provisions for the troops. The dangers of his situation, however, offered a valuable test of the fidelity and endurance of the soldiers, who, although they suffered the most severe privation, never uttered a single complaint.

In this state of things, intelligence was received that the Turkish army had crossed the Danube, and was marching along the Pruth. Peter called a council of war, and declared his intention of advancing at once to meet the enemy; in which measure all the generals, except one, expressed their concurrence. The dissentient officer reminded the czar of the misfortunes of

* Captain Bruce's Memoirs.

the king of Sweden in the Ukraine, and suggested to him the possibility that Cantimir might disappoint him: but Peter was resolved, and, after a fatiguing march for three nights over a desert heath, the troops arrived on the 18th of June at the river Pruth. Here they were joined by prince Cantimir, with a few followers, and they continued their march until the 27th, when they discovered the enemy, to the number of 200,000 men*, already crossing the river. There was no alternative left but to form the lines of battle; and Peter, perceiving that the enemy was endeavouring to surround him with cavalry, extended his lines a considerable way along the right bank. The situation of the army at this juncture was extremely unfortunate. The great body of the Turkish soldiers were before the Russians on one side of the river, and on the other the hostile Tartars of the Crimea. The czar was thus completely surrounded, his means of escape by the river were cut off, and the great numbers of the Turks rendered a flight in the opposite direction impossible. He was placed in more critical circumstances than Charles at Pultowa, and he had been misled, like that unfortunate prince, by an ally who did not possess the power of fulfilling his promise. But his presence of mind and indomitable courage never forsook him. He formed his army, which consisted in detail of 31,554 infantry, and only 6692 cavalry, into a hollow square, placing the women in the centre, and prepared to receive the disorderly but furious onslaught of the Turks. It is evident that if the forces of the sultan had been commanded by skilful officers, the contest must have been speedily terminated. But the superior discipline of the Russians was shown in the steadiness with which they met the charge, and maintained themselves against such great odds. The Turks injudiciously confined their attack to one side of the square, by which, although the loss sustained by the Russians was immense, the czar was enabled constantly to relieve the

* Bruce.

troops, and supply the front with fresh men. The fight continued for three days. Their ammunition was at last exhausted, and there remained no choice between surrendering, and making a desperate attempt to cut their way through the enemy. This latter proposition is said to have been entertained by Peter, who proposed to force a passage in the night, accompanied by his officers and a few select men*; but it is extremely unlikely that he should have contemplated a step that must inevitably have sacrificed the czarina and the remnant of his brave army. It is not improbable, however, that Peter may have conceived some heroic design for forcing a passage; but the certainty of failure must have overruled such an intention almost as soon as it was formed. After the agitation of that eventful day, he surrendered himself to the anxiety by which he was oppressed, and, retiring to his tent on the third night, gave strict orders that he should be left undisturbed. It was on this occasion that the genius and influence of the czarina preserved the empire, her consort, and the army. She who had accompanied him through so many dangers, who had shared in the toils of the field without murmuring, and partaken in the fatigues consequent upon his reforms and improvements, had a right to be heard at a moment of such critical importance. In despite, therefore, of his prohibition she entered his tent, and representing to him the perils by which they were on all sides environed, urged upon him the necessity of seeking to negotiate a peace. She not only suggested this measure, which was probably the very last that might have occurred to Peter, but she undertook to carry it into effect herself. It is the immemorial custom in the east to approach all sovereigns, or their representatives, with presents, and Catherine, aware of that usage, collected all her own jewels and trinkets, and those of the women who had accompanied the expedition, giving a receipt for their value to be discharged on their return to Moscow,

* Bruce.

and dispatched the vice chancellor, accompanied by an officer, with a letter from marshal Scherematoff to the grand vizier, proposing negotiations for a treaty of peace.*

Some hours elapsed, and no answer was returned. It was supposed that the bearers of the letter were put to death, or placed under arrest, when a second officer was despatched with a duplicate of the letter, and it was determined in a council of war, that, should the vizier refuse to accept the proffered terms, an attempt should be made to break through the enemy's ranks. With this view an entrenchment was rapidly formed, and the Russians advanced within a hundred paces of the Turkish lines. A suspension of arms, however, was immediately proclaimed by the enemy, and negotiations were opened for a treaty.

It would appear strange that the vizier should have consented to a cessation of hostilities under such circumstances, when the Russians were completely at his mercy: but he was aware that the Russian troops in Moldavia had advanced to the Danube after reducing the town of Brabilow, and that another division of the general army was on its march from the frontiers of Poland. He, therefore, considered it advisable to avail himself of that opportunity to dictate to Peter the terms upon which he wished to terminate the campaign, knowing that if he postponed the treaty he would be compelled to renew the war against the whole force of the empire. The conditions he proposed were sufficiently humiliating. He demanded the restitution of Azoph, the demolition of the harbour of Taganroc, the renouncement of all further interference in the affairs of Poland and the Cossacks, a free passage for Charles

* Bruce, who was in the battle of the Pruth, asserts his belief that this negociation was conducted without Peter's knowledge; and the "Journal de Pierre le Grand" alludes to the transmision of the letter, but is silent as to the share Catherine took in the affair. There is no doubt, however, that the details of her interference are correct, and Peter afterwards appears to have confirmed them by his declaration at the coronation of the empress in 1723, that "she had been of great assistance to the empire in all times of danger, but particularly at the battle of the Pruth."

back to his own country, and the withdrawal from the Palus Mæotis and the Black Sea. Peter subscribed to all these conditions, but refused to deliver up prince Cantimir to the sultan, declaring that he would rather cede to the Turks the whole country as far as Kursk, than violate his word. This treaty, however, did not satisfy the expectations of Charles; and, indeed, obtained for him scarcely any advantage. The only passage it contained which directly related to him, was that which bound Peter to give him a safe return home, and to conclude a peace with him, if the terms could be agreed upon. He never ceased to importune the sultan to dismiss the vizier and make war upon Russia, until the Porte, wearied by his ungrateful and frantic complaints, at last recalled the pension he had allowed him, and sent him an order to leave the Turkish dominions. The sequel of that monarch's career presents a series of acts that abundantly justify the suspicion that his mind was shattered by the reverses of fortune he had undergone; for, after remaining five years in Turkey, and venturing with a band of grooms and valets, secretaries and cooks* to make a stand against an army of janissaries, spahis, and Tartars; he fled in the disguise of a courier to his own kingdom, where he had not been seen during that long interval, and where his death had for some time been currently believed.

The battle of the Pruth, so fatal in its results to Peter, was one of the most destructive in the annals of history. If the statements of the czar be correct†, his army, on the first day of the engagement, consisted of 31,554 infantry, and 6,692 cavalry, and was reduced on the last day to 22,000 men, which would make his loss amount to 16,246. The loss sustained by the Turks was still greater in consequence of their irregular and scattered method of attack. But numerical details cannot always be relied upon, since they are frequently

* Voltaire's Histoire de Charles XII.
† Journal de Pierre le Grand.

modified to suit the views of one party or the other. There can be no doubt, however, that the czar fought at an extraordinary disadvantage, and that the losses on both sides were dreadful.

When the treaty was concluded, Peter returned into Russia, causing the fortresses of Samara and Kamienska to be demolished; but, as some unavoidable delay occurred in the surrender of Asoph and Taganroc, the sultan became dissatisfied, and Peter entered into a fresh treaty, by which he pledged himself to evacuate Poland within three months; stipulating, however, that Charles, who was still intriguing with the divan, should be required immediately to withdraw from Turkey. The fatigues of the campaign required repose; and Peter, who had suffered considerably by ill health, rested for some time at Carlsbad for the benefit of the waters. Nor were the public affairs that pressed upon him the only matters that at this time engaged his attention. The sovereign who devoted himself so zealously to the interests of his people, was destined to suffer as much inquietude from domestic troubles as from those more serious duties that required the constant exertion of his powers. His son, the czarovitch, Alexis Petrovitz, had, from his youth, abandoned himself to sensual excesses, and treated the glorious acts of his father's reign with supercilious contempt. He was the son of the princess Eudokhia Lupuchin, to whom Peter was married in 1689, and was born in a convent in Tuzdal. The princess, his mother, having been, unfortunately, a person for whom the czar never entertained any affection, it does not appear that Alexis was regarded in his youth with much tenderness by his father. But, if the testimony of a minister of the court, who reported very favourably upon the character of the prince, may be relied upon, his education was attended to with the utmost care. He is said to have studied history, mathematics, hydraulics, navigation, and the art of war; and to have been well acquainted with the German and French languages. Notwithstanding

these acquisitions — if, indeed, the representation may be credited, which is more than doubtful — his conduct was in the last degree degrading to his station. His hours were spent in low and vicious company; and, insensible to the demands of his responsible position, he desired to avoid entering into an alliance with a Roman princess, the sister of the empress, which Peter wished to bring about, not merely with a view to strengthen the relations of the empire, but to reclaim his son. The ingratitude of Alexis made a deep impression on the czar, and he resolved to pause in the midst of his labours, until he had accomplished a marriage from which he anticipated such beneficial results. This object was speedily effected, and the marriage took place in the palace of the queen of Poland. When the ceremony was over, Peter returned to St. Petersburgh, where he again solemnized his wedding with the czarina, and held a festival in that city which was remarkable for its pomp and the expression it drew forth of the popular confidence. But this was only the prelude to fresh labours. He renewed his plans for the improvement of the country, laid down a number of new roads, cut several canals, enlarged his navy, and encouraged the erection of more substantial dwellings in the new city. His ultimate design of establishing St. Petersburgh as the capital of the empire, now gradually developed itself; and the first open measure he adopted towards the accomplishment of that object, was the removal of the senate from Moscow. The commercial advantages the people had already gained through their communication with the Baltic had reconciled them to the change, and the opposition with which the return had been originally received was now considerably relaxed. But much remained yet to be done before the prosperity of the new capital could be secured. Resistance from without was more to be apprehended than remonstrances at home; and Peter was not slow to act upon the necessity of circumstances.

CHAP. V.

PETER ENTERS INTO A LEAGUE WITH THE ELECTORS OF BRANDENBURGH AND HANOVER, AND THE KING OF DENMARK. — NUMEROUS SUCCESSES ARE ACHIEVED BY THE ALLIED FORCES. — NAVAL VICTORY OVER THE SWEDES. — PROSPERITY OF ST. PETERSBURGH RAPIDLY INCREASES. — INFLEXIBLE JUSTICE OF THE CZAR. — CHARLES RE-APPEARS BEFORE STRALSUND. — INTRIGUES OF GOERTZ. — SIEGE OF STRALSUND, AND FLIGHT OF CHARLES. — THE DREAM OF RUSSIAN AGGRANDISEMENT ALMOST ACCOMPLISHED. — PETER UNDERTAKES A SECOND JOURNEY. — VISITS COPENHAGEN, HAMBURGH, AND LUBECK. — PROCEEDS TO HOLLAND. — GERMS OF AN EUROPEAN REVOLUTION. — THE CZAR GOES INTO FRANCE. — ANECDOTES AND OPINIONS. — HE VISITS FREDERICK OF PRUSSIA AT BERLIN. — IS COMPELLED BY REPORTS CONCERNING PRINCE ALEXIS TO RETURN TO RUSSIA.

The possession of Pomerania, the most northerly of the German provinces, was necessary to the projects of the czar, who desired as much to humiliate the king of Sweden, as to secure the safety of his establishment on the embouchure of the Neva. Pomerania, which lies north and south between the Baltic and Mecklenburgh, had passed through the hands of several masters, and had at last been ceded to Gustavus Adolphus in the thirty years' war. In order to render his design more certain, Peter entered into a league with the electors of Brandenburg and Hanover, and the king of Denmark, drawing up the articles himself, and the details of the the necessary operations. Stralsund was first blockaded, and the allied forces proceeded along the Wismar road, followed at a distance by the Swedish troops under the command of count Steinbock, who, coming up with the Danish and Saxon divisions before the Russians had time to join them, completely routed them in a few hours. This slight check to their progress was soon

repaired by a victory obtained by Peter over Steinbock (whose march was signalised by disgraceful excesses), in the little town of Altona, close to Hamburg, which he reduced to ashes. The Russian army went into quarters for the winter, and the campaign was again renewed with vigour in the following year: when Steinbock was compelled to abandon the town of Tenningen, into which he had obtained entrance by the intrigues of baron Goertz, one of the most crafty and unprincipled diplomatists of his age. Steinbock and 11,000 Swedes surrendered themselves prisoners of war, and although the ransom demanded for the liberation of that general was only 8000 imperial crowns, he was suffered to linger in the dungeons of Copenhagen until the day of his death. Nearly the whole of Pomerania was overrun and partitioned amongst the allies, scarcely a place remaining in the possession of Sweden except Stralsund, the siege of which Peter confided to Menzikoff, while he returned to St. Petersburgh to make preparations for a descent upon Helsingfors in the gulf of Finland. His operations along the whole line of that coast were equally successful. He soon mastered Bergo and Abo, the capital; and, transferring to St. Petersburgh from the latter town a magnificent library, he raised a building for its reception, which still remains a witness to his enterprise, and the spirit of improvement which seemed to preside over all his actions.

But the Swedes, viewing the encroachments of the czar in Finland with terror, and resolving to spare no means to arrest his progress, fitted out a considerable squadron to cruise in the gulf. The czar, however, was ready to meet them; and, setting sail from Cronstadt, fell in with them close to the island of Elend, where, after a severe engagement, he destroyed several of their ships, and took the admiral prisoner. The consternation which the news of this victory spread over Sweden was so great that even Stockholm trembled for its safety. His return to St. Petersburgh on this occa-

sion was an ovation of more than ordinary magnificence. The czarina had just given birth to a daughter; and, upon his triumphal entry, Peter instituted the order of St. Catherine to commemorate his sense of her devotion and magnanimity. The galleys of the conquerors and the conquered sailed up the Neva in procession, and the czar, in his capacity of rear-admiral, presented to the senate a report of the battle, and was immediately created vice-admiral, amidst the rejoicings of the people. It was not the least remarkable feature in the character of this great man, that he set the example, in his own person, of ascending through the different grades of the service by the force of his individual claims. At Pultowa he served as major-general, and in the action in the gulf of Finland he acted as rear-admiral, under the command of admiral Apraxin. This precedent could not fail to have due weight with a people who had been so long accustomed to oppression, and the right of the strong hand. It had more effect in generating a spirit of emulation, and in eradicating the prejudices and vices of feudal slavery, than a code of the wisest laws could have accomplished.

St. Petersburgh presented a scene of festivity such as had never been known in Russia before. The intercourse of the people with other nations had in a few years changed the whole character of society. Balls and entertainments, upon a large scale, diffused amongst the inhabitants a taste for pleasures that had been hitherto unknown to them. Public dinners were given in the palace of the czar, to which all classes of persons were invited, and at which the different ranks were appropriately divided at separate tables, the czar passing from table to table, freely conversing with his subjects on matters connected with their particular trade or occupations. Civilization was thus promoted in detail, and insinuated in the most agreeable shape into the domestic usages of the citizens. But while amusements occupied a part of the czar's time, he was not forgetful of the more important affairs that demanded consider-

ation. The necessity of establishing a naval force had always been apparent, and his recent victories over the Swedes sufficiently testified the facility with which it might be rendered available for the ulterior projects which the extension and security of the empire required. He accordingly devoted much care to the subject, and in an incredibly short period was master of so large a fleet, that he contemplated a descent upon Sweden, and even calculated upon the possibility of entering Stockholm. Besides a variety of galleys and other vessels, he built fifty ships of war, which were all ready for sea within a twelvemonth.

The discovery of some large peculations amongst the ministers and several favourites of the court just at this juncture directed the czar's proceedings, for a short time, into an unexpected channel. It appeared that Menzikoff, Apraxin, and others who held high offices of trust and responsibility had, either by themselves or through their servants, embezzled a part of the finances of the empire; that the revenues were consequently in a state of confusion; that trade was greatly deranged; and that the payments to the army had been made very irregularly. The ministers, availing themselves of the new outlet for commerce, had monopolised its chief advantages; and the Dutch merchants complained bitterly of a system by which they were deprived of the greater part of their profits. Peter at once established an inquisition into the facts, and proceeded to act with the utmost rigour. He felt that the prosperity of his new capital depended mainly upon the justice with which its affairs were administered, and that its geographical position, which afforded it so complete a command of maritime resources must cease to attract a foreign trade unless its fiscal officers possessed the confidence of the merchants. Menzikoff and the rest pleaded that they had been engaged abroad in the service of the country, and could not be aware of the malpractices of their servants. The czar admitted that their plea was in some measure founded in justice;

but, resolved to make an example, he confiscated the greater part of the property of those whose agents were proved to be guilty. The estates of the remainder were wholly forfeited; some individuals were sentenced to the knout, and others were banished to Siberia. This measure was loudly called for by the necessities of the case, and the inflexible honesty of the sovereign was never exercised with a more beneficial result.

The unhappy wife of Alexis, who had been treated by her husband with the most cruel neglect, expired in a few days, after having given birth to a son, whose fortunes she committed to the guardianship of the czar.* The court was plunged into deep affliction by this melancholy circumstance, and the czar in particular exhibited profound grief. But the birth of a prince to the czarina converted their mourning into congratulations, and the most extravagant festivities were held in honour of the event.†

St. Petersburgh had now gradually become the capital of Russia. Foreign merchandise imported at Archangel was prohibited from being sent to Moscow, and was consequently transmitted to St. Petersburgh, which was the residence of the court, of the principal nobility, and of all the ambassadors from other powers, including at this period two from the east. The rapidity with

* Some absurd stories respecting this unfortunate lady found their way into France and England; but they were entirely without foundation. It was said that she escaped to Louisiana, where she married a French sergeant; that she returned with him to Paris, and that marshal Saxe procured a commission for him in the Isle of Bourbon. Two or three impostors assumed her name, and one of them visited England. See "Family Library" — Memoir of Peter the Great.

† It is difficult to credit the statements that are made by several writers respecting the entertainments that were given on this occasion. At the table where the gentlemen sat, at a grand dinner, a dwarf woman, wearing no other article of dress except some fantastic device on her head, jumped out of a large pie, and drank the healths of the guests: and a farce of the same kind was acted at the ladies' table, where a dwarf man was concealed in a similar dish. The festivities lasted for ten days, under the superintendence of the czar himself, and the most sickening excesses, as well as the most absurd mummeries, are said to have taken place. But the manners of the Russians, even in the reign of Peter the Great, were still but slightly removed from barbarism. Their feasts were rude and immoderate, and they exhibited neither delicacy nor discretion in the common intercourse of life. Peter broke down some of their old prejudices, but he left the establishment of social refinement to his successors.

which its prosperity advanced was unparalleled. Its manufactures increased with its external trade, and it soon assumed a rank equal to that of some of the most important cities in Europe. Its affairs were in this flourishing condition, when Charles XII., exhausted by his fruitless efforts to win over the sultan to his cause, suddenly appeared, on the 11th of November, 1714, not at the head of an army, but as a fugitive in disguise before the gates of Stralsund.

It might be supposed that the severe sufferings and mortifications to which the folly of this unfortunate monarch had already subjected him, must by this time have subdued his love of adventures: but his misfortunes had failed to make him prudent. Returning unchanged to his own dominions, after an absence of upwards of five years, he found that in the interim the whole of Europe had been in a state of transition. A peace had been concluded between England and France; George I. had ascended the English throne; Louis XIV., after breaking in upon the independence of Spain, had dictated terms of peace to the German emperor and the people of Holland; while Peter, his former antagonist, had acquired undisputed influence from the Elbe to the shores of the Baltic. The various claims of the northern powers to the Swedish dependencies had been secretly agitated through the agency of the treacherous Goertz, who never hesitated to forfeit his allegiance in one quarter if he could gain an advantage by proffering it in another. Thus the elector of Hanover, in the person of the king of England, put forward claims upon those lands that had formerly been ceded to Gustavus; the king of Denmark demanded the restitution of Scanie, the best of the Swedish provinces; the king of Prussia asserted a similar right; and the king of Poland desired to annex Courland to his dominions: and they all referred their claims to Peter; while the duke of Holstein, governing under the despotism of Denmark, and the duke of Mecklenburgh, almost at war with his own subjects, implored the protection of the powerful

czar.* Throughout the progress of these designs upon the independence of Sweden, Goertz had laboured indefatigably to increase the confusion, under the pretence of establishing a neutrality; and so complete was the ascendancy which that subtle minister exerted over inferior minds, that he soon succeeded in gaining a more entire control over the judgment of Charles than the virtuous count Piper ever exercised. The first act of weakness which Charles committed, on his return to Stralsund, was that of taking Goertz into his confidence; but he might have overcome the evil of such an association, had he not rashly fallen into his old error of hastily adopting the first measures which the immediate circumstances of his situation happened to suggest.

The claims of the different powers upon the possessions of Sweden were not all equally just; although they were all equally defensible by the usages of war. But Sweden was not in a condition to resist them. Her resources had been drained by the ruinous exploits of her sovereign; and the people, losing their confidence in the skill, although they never had any reason to doubt the valour, of Charles, were no longer disposed to embark in quarrels which might be averted by arbitration. Charles, however, was inaccessible to reasoning of that kind. He saw nothing in the demands of the allies but an insolent exhibition of superiority, and he resolved, even in the fearful exigency in which he was placed, without men or money, to resist the propositions for a negotiation which were held out to him by the united powers. It was not the fury of despair which prompted him to this rash proceeding, but rather the gallantry of a nature that never could be penetrated by despair. He regarded the allies with contempt, and relied solely upon his own courage. But it was necessary to make preparations for defence; and he accordingly applied to the citizens of Stockholm for contributions to enable him to raise and equip a force adequate to his necessities. The generous Swedes, who

* Voltaire.

blamed and pitied him, who condemned his errors, but admired his boldness, and sympathised in his misfortunes, could not be indifferent to the appeal of a prince who, in the outset of his career, had covered the name of his country with glory; and, exhausted as they were by commercial depressions, as well as by expensive wars, they complied with the wishes of the king, although they felt that he was pursuing a course which must plunge him into still greater difficulties. The result was that, in the month of April in the following year, 1715, the Danes, the Saxons, and the Prussians, uniting their strength, lay down in a formidable body before the walls of Stralsund. The impetuous Charles had thus only exchanged one prison for another: in escaping from the wilds of Turkey it was but to find himself in a still more humiliating situation on the shores of the Baltic. During the siege, which was brief and decisive, the dependencies of Charles were divided amongst the allies; and, as if it were fitting that the troubles of a monarch who tempted Providence so audaciously, should come thickly upon him, he received at the same time intelligence of the death of his prime minister count Piper, one of the most honest and celebrated men of his time; who, taken prisoner at the battle of Pultowa, expired in captivity in the fortress of Shlusselburg. Stralsund was speedily reduced to a heap of ruins; and Charles, urged upon all sides to fly, yielded at last to the entreaties of his friends, and succeeded in making his escape by water to Carlscrona, where he remained during the ensuing winter, meditating new projects and future conquests.*

While the glory of Charles was thus rapidly declining, the fame and power of Peter were attaining their utmost height. Livonia, Esthonia, Carelia, Ingria, and nearly the whole of Finland were now annexed to the Russian

* When general Decker, who, after Charles had evacuated Stralsund, surrendered the town into the hands of the Prussians, was subsequently reproached by Charles for having capitulated with the enemy, Decker replied that he had his majesty's glory too much at heart to hold out in a town which his majesty had left.

empire. He had established outlets to the sea by which he could communicate in security with civilized Europe; and within his own territories he had created new establishments adapted to the various departments of industry, to the army, the navy, and the laws. Prince Galitzin occupied Finland with a disciplined army; generals Bruce and Bauer had the command of 30,000 Russians, who were scattered through Poland; marshal Scherematof lay in Pomerania with a large force; Weimar had surrendered by capitulation; and all the sovereigns of the north were either his allies or his instruments. The dream of Russian aggrandisement appeared now to be realised almost in full by the sleepless activity and fertile genius of the czar. It was not surprising, therefore, that the people of Stockholm daily expected that he would appear before their gates, and, taking advantage of the disasters of their fugitive monarch, reduce Sweden to subjection, as he had previously laid waste the provinces that separated him from the coast of the Baltic sea on the one side, and the Black sea on the other. He was master of both shores of the gulf of Finland, and the possession of Sweden would have given him the entire command of the Baltic and the gulf of Bothnia, over which, even as it was, his flag ranged in freedom. But Peter was too politic to attempt at this juncture so enormous an extension of power. He was aware of the jealousies which such a disposition must have excited in Germany and Poland, and he wisely contented himself with the acquisitions he had already secured; suffering the headstrong Charles to bring his kingdom into greater jeopardy, in the hope, probably, that it might ultimately fall to pieces by its own weakness. At this crisis of affairs the unprincipled Goertz endeavoured to effect an union between the two monarchs, and negotiations, having that object in view, were actually commenced, and might have been carried to a more decisive conclusion but for events which diverted the attention of both sovereigns into other channels. Goertz has been blamed for projecting this

treaty of reconciliation, and accused of desiring to accomplish through its means a variety of results: such as the restoration of Pomerania to Sweden, and the crown of Poland to Stanislaus, the dethronement of the king of England, and, by a conspiracy against the duke of Orleans, the reduction of France under a Spanish regency. It is very probable that the subtle minister might have contemplated some of these projects, that he might have anticipated from the combined armies of the two northern heroes the rescue of Spain, and the advancement of Alberoni, and that he might have even calculated upon the cession of Pomerania, and the recognition of Stanislaus. But, as the adviser of Charles XII., he was justified in seeking an alliance which must in any case have greatly benefited his master, and protected his country against those imminent dangers that appeared to be impending over it at the moment; and if he looked beyond immediate advantages, to remote contingencies, the design was not on that account, the less worthy of applause. As it was, it had the effect of openly confirming the dispositions of Peter towards Sweden, the czar declaring that he did not enter into war for the sake of glory, but for the good of the empire, and that he had no desire to exhibit any feelings of animosity against an enemy whom he had deprived of the power of doing mischief. Whatever faults may be charged upon Goertz—and there is no doubt that they were numerous enough—history must pronounce his conduct upon this occasion to have been guided by a sagacious policy.*

Satisfied with the circumstances of the empire, and anxious to improve his knowledge of other nations, Peter now resolved to undertake a second tour through Europe. His first tour had been limited to practical

* It is not to be denied that Goertz, in conjunction with cardinal Alberoni, a baser, if possible, and certainly a more influential person, entered into secret intrigues against the English throne and the Spanish government; but the single fact of endeavouring to cement a union between Peter and Charles, however it might have been mixed up with unacknowledged and discreditable motives, may be vindicated upon just and obvious grounds.

inquiries into the useful arts; but his second was mainly addressed to an examination of the political systems of the European cabinets. When he first left his own country to acquire information abroad, he was young, ardent, uninstructed, and undistinguished; but now he had achieved a name that was famous all over the world, and he was regarded, with justice, as one of the most extraordinary persons of the age. During the nineteen years that had elapsed, in the interval, he had strengthened and enlarged his dominions, had traversed and subjugated many provinces, had succeeded in accomplishing the great purposes of his wise ambition, and had experienced amidst the splendid triumphs of his career some serious reverses, from which such a mind as his could not fail to extract useful admonitions. He went forth, followed by the gratitude of Russia, to improve his knowledge of the means by which he could contribute still more largely to her prosperity. The czarina accompanied him upon this journey, but being in her third pregnancy, she rested for a short time at Schwerin, from whence she soon afterwards set out to rejoin her husband at Holland. On her way, however, she was again taken ill, and delivered at Wesel of a prince, who died on the following day. This event, it appears did not delay her intention of meeting her husband in Holland, as we find that in ten days afterwards she arrived in Amsterdam.

In the mean time Peter had visited Stralsund, Mecklenburg, Hamburg, and Pyrmont, and subsequently proceeded to Copenhagen, where he was received with great distinction by the king of Denmark. On this occasion, a squadron of British ships, under the command of sir John Norris, and a squadron of Dutch ships, commanded by rear-admiral Grave, arrived at Copenhagen; and, it being understood that a Swedish fleet was out at sea, the four armaments, Russian, Danish, Dutch, and English, united under the standard of the czar, and put out to sea. Not falling in with the Swedes, who had secured their safety in Carlscrona,

the fleets separated, and Peter, taking leave of the court of Denmark, proceeded on to Hamburg. This incident was always referred to by Peter as one of the most gratifying circumstances of his life, and even his proudest victories appeared to afford him less pleasure than the recollection of the moment when he raised his flag as commander-in-chief of the united fleets.

From Hamburg he continued his route to Lübeck, and had a private interview with the king of Prussia at Havelberg, from whence he returned by the Elbe to Hamburg. The anecdotes of his journey that have been preserved in a variety of personal memoirs are all calculated to show the simplicity of his manners, and his natural aversion to parade and ceremony. At Nymagen, where he arrived late at night in a common postchaise, accompanied by only two attendants, he is said to have supped upon poached eggs and a little bread and cheese, for which the landlord charged 100 ducats the next morning. Peter remonstrated against the demand, and inquired if eggs were so very scarce in that place. "No," replied the landlord, "but emperors are." Peter payed the bill, and was well satisfied to have purchased such a hint of European tactics at so small a rate.

At Amsterdam he was received with a feeling of delight almost approaching to idolatry. The people regarded him as their pupil in the arts of commerce and ship-building; and shared in the glories of the victor of Pultowa, as if he were one of themselves. Nor did Peter hesitate in putting them as much at their ease in his presence, as he had done when he had formerly lived amongst them, working like themselves, and participating in their hard labour and rude fare. The cottage in which he had resided when he was learning the art of ship-building, he now found just as he had left it, but distinguished by the name of "The Prince's House," and preserved in order by the affectionate people with unabated interest.* Upon entering

* The house is still to be seen as Peter left it. In 1823 the princess of

this humble scene, he was deeply affected, and desired to be left alone. The recollections that pressed upon him at that moment were not amongst the least impressive of his busy life.

His residence in Holland, where he remained for three months, exhibited a succession of trivial incidents connected with his former associates, all of whom were recognised by the czar with the greatest cordiality; but while he was thus engaged in revisiting the dockyards, in examining models, and receiving small tokens of popular attachment, he was not indifferent to matters of higher importance. The Hague, from the time of the peace of Nimeguen, had acquired the reputation of being the centre of the negotiations of Europe, and was crowded with travellers and foreign ministers. The foundations of an European revolution were then being laid in the diplomatic circles of that place; and the czar, prolonged his stay in the Low Countries, with a view to assure himself more clearly of the state of parties in the south and in the north, and to prepare for the side which, in the course of time, it might become advisable for him to take.*

Keeping himself aloof from the intrigues by which he was surrounded, and availing himself of all the opportunities within his reach of improving his information respecting the state of Europe, he proceeded to fulfil his intention of visiting France, after he had satisfied his curiosity in Holland. Vast preparations, worthy of the occasion, were made in France for his reception; but Peter, with his accustomed contempt of splendour, desired to avoid the display as much as possible. Accompanied by four gentlemen, he outstripped

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Orange, sister to the emperor Alexander, surrounded it with a neat building, which resembles a conservatory, having first purchased it to secure its preservation. The ladder leading to the loft where Peter was accustomed to perform his devotions, a little oak table and three chairs which he used, some models, and several of his working tools, are still carefully kept in the room which he occupied. Over the mantel is inscribed, "PETRO MAGNO ALEXANDER;" and underneath is written, in Dutch and Russian, "To a great man nothing is little."

* Voltaire.

the escorts, and entered Paris without ostentation. His journey was a succession of fêtes; wherever he appeared he was treated with magnificence: his fame had penetrated the haunts of art and science, as well as the halls of palaces; portraits of himself and the czarina, medals with flattering inscriptions, and the most ingenious devices, representing some of the events of his life, started up before him in places where he least expected to meet such evidences of his greatness: he stepped in the midst of triumphs, and renewed, in his ovation at the French capital, the whole history of his glories as a hero and a legislator. But he could not be flattered out of his simplicity. Declining the offers of the court, he retired to a private hotel in a remote quarter of the town, in order that he might employ his time agreeably to his own wishes, instead of being trammelled by the fatiguing and idle ceremonies of the Louvre.

He left Catherine behind him in Holland on this occasion, apprehending that the witty court of France, with its sarcasms and its ceremonials, might possibly wound by neglect the delicacy of a woman whose greatness of soul elevated her above the conventions of the palace. The marriage of Louis XIV. with madame de Maintenon bore some resemblance, it is true, to his own union with Catherine; but madame de Maintenon was an accomplished person, and Catherine's merits were of a different order. Catherine was a heroine, madame de Maintenon a fascinating woman: Catherine had perilled life by the side of her husband, from the Pruth to the Baltic, upon land and sea; madame de Maintenon, retreating from political display, was content to attest her devotion, and preserve her supremacy, in retirement: Catherine was of obscure origin, madame de Maintenon was of noble birth; and while the czarina was publicly acknowledged by Peter, madame de Maintenon became the wife of Louis XIV. in private. Yet, although Peter determined not to risk the feelings of the czarina in the French court, espe-

cially as the death of Louis XIV. had removed madame de Maintenon from the position which she had previously held, the last wish he expressed on leaving Paris was to see that celebrated woman, the widow of the king.

Peter was not only a practical artist, but was well acquainted with those sciences upon which the practical arts are based. He possessed a mathematical mind and a skilful hand. The rapidity with which he accumulated knowledge could be paralleled only by the tenacity with which he retained it, and the facility with which he could employ it as the occasion served. At the Academy of Sciences they placed before him, amongst other curiosities, a map of Russia, which he instantly discovered to be full of errors, and pointed out to the exhibitors the mistakes they had made in the geography of his dominions, and of the tracts on the borders of the Caspian sea. He afterwards accepted at their hands the honour of being admitted as a member of their body. He visited the manufactories and mercantile depôts, and carried away all the information he could glean from them; had several private conferences with the French ministers relative to the subsisting peace between the northern powers; and drew up the minutes of a treaty of commerce, which he caused to be shaped into regular form, and negotiated on his return to St. Petersburg. Every moment was filled with business. He visited the tapestry of the Gobelins, the carpets of the Savonnerie, the residences of the goldsmiths, painters, sculptors, and mathematical instrument makers; and so far overcame his scruples against appearing in public, that he went to see the French parliament, and attended public worship on two occasions in state. Amongst the objects that extracted unbounded admiration from him was the tomb of cardinal Richelieu, one of the richest specimens of sculpture in Paris. But it was not on account of the glories of the chisel that it occupied his attention. He is said to have exclaimed, upon seeing it, "Great man!

I would have given half of my empire to learn of thee how to govern the other half!"

On the occasion of his visit to the mausoleum of cardinal Richelieu, the doctors of the Sorbonne took the opportunity of putting a memorial into his hands, the object of which was to induce his majesty, who was also the patriarch, or head, of the Greek church, to recognise either the spiritual or temporal authority of the pope, with a view to the union of the Greek and Latin churches. The schism in the Christian church, which terminated in the complete independence of the bishop of Constantinople, did not take the final shape of excommunication until the middle of the eleventh century, when the pope in Rome, and the patriarch in Byzantium, severally anathematised each other, and all further communion between the churches ceased. The doctors of the Sorbonne, who were much better acquainted than Peter with the history of the schism, confined their address almost exclusively to that point upon which they knew that Peter entertained the strongest prejudices. They were too well acquainted with his character not to be aware that the great difficulty would be to induce him to surrender his objections to the ascendant authority claimed by the pope, and they strenuously urged upon his attention the liberty enjoyed by the Gallican church, as a proof that the union which they desired to accomplish, under the papal head, would not involve any sacrifice of freedom. They declared that the judgment of the pope was not a rule of faith, and that the pope was obliged to submit to the councils. But these were matters with which Peter gave himself little concern: he received the memorial with good humour, said that he was a soldier, unaccustomed to disputations of that sort, and referred the matter to the Russian bishops. The answer returned to the professors of the Sorbonne was polite, but decisive. The majority of their body were indignant, and even the heads of the Roman church were extremely dissatisfied; so that the authors of the memorial

had the mortification of finding that in their attempt to reunite the two churches, they succeeded in widening the breach between them, and displeasing both.*

This incident, which the czar treated at the moment with an air of courteous indifference, produced subsequently, in the year 1718, when he expelled the

* Voltaire, whose fine wit, whenever he touches upon the affairs of the church, almost dazzles his judgment, and frequently induces him to sacrifice truth to satire, treats this proceeding on the part of the Sorbonne as if the only real difference between the Greek and Roman churches consisted in the rejection by the one of the supreme head of the other. He does not state so much in words, but the manner in which he relates the circumstance (see Histoire de l'Empire de Russie, sous Pierre le Grand) is distinctly calculated to make that impression upon the mind of the reader: an impression which seems to have spread widely amongst people who accept current authorities without examination The fact is, however, that the differences between the two churches are much more deeply seated, and much less reconcilable, than the disavowal of the pontifical authority. Towards the middle of the seventeenth century (1630), Cyril, the patriarch of Constantinople, published a confession of the Greek faith, by which it appeared that, upon all the important points in controversy, the Greek and Anglican churches were agreed Indeed, so remarkable was the uniformity, that bishop Bramhall exclaims, in his "Just Vindication," "he is wholly ours: and, to declare to the world that he was so, he resolved to dedicate his confession of the faith of the Greek church to the king of England." The confession of Cyril, however, must be received with caution He carried some of his views to an extremity which is not justified by the general declarations and usages of the church, although it must be admitted that the looseness of definition which prevailed upon some doctrines left them in a great measure unsettled questions. The most authentic standard of the Greek religion is contained in a treatise entitled "The Orthodox Confession of the Catholic and Apostolic Eastern Church." This document was originally drawn up by Peter Mogislaus, bishop of Kief, and approved of by a provincial council assembled in that city. The reader who is curious in such matters will find an account of it in the Bibliotheca Græca of Fabricius, and in Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History It appears by this confession that the doctrines of the Greek church differ widely from the church of Rome, but that they also differ widely from those of the Anglican and other Christian societies; and that the points of disagreement are so important as to render the union of the Greek church with the church of Rome impossible, except by a sacrifice at one side or the other, which neither side would be likely to make. It may be added, however, in reference to the doctors of the Sorbonne, that they did not overrate their liberties in the memorial they presented to the czar. They have always been as enlightened a body as could be expected to exist under the restrictions of their faith; an instance of which may be cited in the correspondence which took place between them and archbishop Wake, early in the last century, upon the practicability of effecting a union between the English and the Gallican churches. Dr. Dupin was then instructed to state, on their behalf, their willingness to abandon the apochryphal books of Scripture, considered as canonical books, and to accept of them as being merely *deutero-canonical*. Although it is not easy to determine in what precise sense Dr. Dupin desired the term *deutero-canonical* to be understood, yet, taken in any acceptation, it is sufficient to prove, that the doctors of the Sorbonne surrendered the critical infallibility of the council of Trent, by which the inspired authority of those books was formally established. The discussions, also, which were carried on between Bossuet and Leibnitz exhibited, on the part of the Gallican, a similar disposition towards an enlarged and liberal construction of Christianity.

Jesuits out of his own dominions, one of those memorable farces, the institution of the conclave, with which Peter used sometimes to soften the rigours of the government for the entertainment of a people whom he had not yet entirely redeemed from barbarism. There was a foolish old man, named Sotof, about the court, who had been the czar's writing-master, and who imagined, upon that account, that he was entitled to be rewarded with the highest dignities of the state. At the time of the expulsion of the Jesuits, Peter, who was very anxious to dissipate any fears that might be entertained as to the union of the churches, invested the fool Sotof with the dignity of pope, gave him a salary of 2000 roubles, and assigned him a house at St. Petersburg, in the quarter of the Tartars. Sotof was installed in great state by the mob, and harangued by four stammering men; after which he created a body of mimic cardinals, and paraded the streets of the capital at their head. This snatch of satire was renewed after the death of Sotof, both in Moscow and St. Petersburg; and, although it appears to have been nothing more than a brief carnival of the lower classes, it had the effect of confirming the popular aversion to a church which assumed a power of control and anathema over kings and nations.

Having satisfied his curiosity in France, he took his leave of that country, carrying with him several artisans for the purpose of establishing their different crafts in Russia. During the period of his short residence in the French capital, he inspired an universal sentiment of respect. Although he did not hesitate to protest against the luxurious extravagance of the court, and even carried the expression of his opinions so far as to say that he "grieved for France and its infant king, and believed that the latter was on the point of losing his kingdom through luxury and superfluities;" yet the witty and satirical courtiers, who observed him closely, were compelled to bear testimony to the mag-

nanimity of his nature. Contemporary criticism is of so much value in the attempt to determine historical character, that the opinions which were pronounced concerning him at this period cannot be excluded from the estimate which posterity will make of his faults and merits. A writer who was attached to the court describes him thus: — "His deportment is full of dignity and confidence, as becomes an absolute master: he has large and bright eyes, with a penetrating and occasionally stern glance. His motions, which are abrupt and hasty, betray the violence of his passions and the impetuosity of his disposition: his orders succeed each other rapidly and imperiously: he dismisses with a word, with a sign, without allowing himself to be thwarted by time, place, or circumstance; now and then forgetting even the rules of decorum; yet with the regent and the young king he maintains his state, and regulates all his movements according to the points of a strict and proud etiquette. For the rest, the court discovered in him more great qualities than bad ones; it considered his faults to be merely trivial and superficial. It remarked that he was usually sober, and that he gave way only now and then to excessive intemperance; that, regular in his habits of living, he always went to bed at nine o'clock, rose at four, and was never for a moment unemployed; and, accordingly, that he was well-informed, and seemed to have a better knowledge of naval affairs and fortification than any man in France."* The writers of that period, who possessed the best opportunities of becoming acquainted with his movements, speak in terms of admiration of the experienced glance and skilful hand with which he selected the objects most worthy of admiration, and of the avidity with which he examined the studios of the artists, the manufactories, and the museums. The searching questions which he put to learned men afforded sufficient proof, they observe, of

* Louville — Memoirs.

the sagacity of a capacious mind, which was as prompt to acquire knowledge as it was eager to learn.*

The journey of the czar through France, to rejoin the czarina at Amsterdam, was distinguished by the same insatiable love of inquiry. Sometimes he used to alight from his carriage, and wander into the fields to converse with the husbandmen, taking notes of their observations, which he treasured up for future use. The improvement of his empire was always present to his thoughts, and he never suffered an occasion to pass away, however trivial, from which he could extract a practical hint, that he did not turn it to account. His activity appeared to be incapable of fatigue. From Amsterdam, accompanied by Catherine, he passed on to Prussia. Upon his arrival at Berlin he went at once to a private lodging; but the king sending his master of the ceremonies to attend upon him, the czar informed that officer that he would wait upon his majesty the next day at noon. Two hours before the time, a magnificent cortege of royal carriages appeared before the door of the czar's lodging; but when noon arrived, they were informed that the czar was already with the king. He had gone out by a private way, to avoid the magnificence which he regarded as an impediment to action.

The character of Frederic of Prussia was distinguished by the same blunt, persevering, military qualities which belonged to that of Peter. He lived plainly, dressed like a common soldier, was extremely abstemious, and exhibited in his habits even a needless severity of discipline. The meeting, therefore, between sovereigns who so closely resembled each other in their tastes, who were equally self-devoted to the good of their people, and equally uncorrupted by the pomp and temptations of power, was a spectacle such as history rarely presents. The czarina was worthy of entering into the scene, for she was the only female sovereign in Europe who could share, without shrinking, the toils and difficulties of their career. A modern historian † remarks that if Charles

* Fontenelle, Duclos, Louville. † Voltaire.

XII. had been admitted to the group, four crowned heads would have been seen together, surrounded by less luxury than a German bishop or a Roman cardinal. But, while Peter, Catherine, and Frederic entertained an utter contempt for ostentatious display, the fashion of the court, which was probably directed by the queen, rendered it necessary that the illustrious visitors should be treated with a show of grandeur and parade which they despised. They were entertained in a costly style at the palace; and their manners did not fail to excite the sarcasms and gossip of the courtiers, who were incapable of comprehending the real dignity of their characters, and who were disappointed to find in the czar and czarina of Russia a couple of plain, rough, and, agreeably to their notions, vulgar persons. The particulars of this visit to the court of Prussia are minutely commemorated in the loose and satirical memoirs of the day; while the visits to Paris, Amsterdam, and London are recorded, without a single exception, in a spirit of grave admiration, that exhibits a curious contrast to the flippant *tracasseries* of Berlin.*

* Amongst the most pert and lively writers who chronicled the visit, and caricatured the czar and his simple train of followers, is the margrave de Bareith. She gives a very amusing account in her memoirs of the reception at court, and says, that when Peter approached to embrace the queen, her majesty looked as if she would rather be excused. Their majesties were attended, she informs us, by a whole train of what were called ladies, as part of their suite, consisting chiefly of young German women, who performed the part of ladies'-maids, chamber-maids, cook-maids, and washerwomen; almost all of whom had a richly clothed child in their arms. The queen, it is added, refused to salute these creatures. At table the czar was seized with one of his convulsive fits, at a moment when he happened to have a knife in his hand, and the queen was so frightened that she attempted to leave the table; but Peter told her not to be uneasy, assuring her that he would do her no harm. On another occasion, he caught her by the hand with such force, that she was obliged to desire him to be more respectful, on which he burst out into a loud fit of laughter, and said that she was much more delicate than his Catherine. But the most entertaining part of the whole is a sketch of the personal appearance of the uncultivated sovereigns. "The czarina," says the margrave, "is short and lusty, remarkably coarse, and without grace or animation. *One need only see her to be satisfied of her low birth.* At the first blush one would take her for a German actress. Her clothes looked as if bought at a doll-shop; every thing was so old-fashioned, and so bedecked with silver and tinsel. She was decorated with a dozen orders, portraits of saints, and relics, which occasioned such a clatter, that when she walked one would suppose an ass with bells was approaching. The czar, on the contrary, is tall and well made. His countenance is handsome; but there is something in it so rude that it inspires one with dread. He was dressed like a seaman, in a frock, *without lace or ornament.*" The spirit of the

On Peters's return through Holland, he purchased a variety of pictures of the Dutch and Flemish schools, several zoological, entomological, and anatomical cabinets and a large collection of books. With the treasures thus accumulated he laid the foundation of the imperial Academy of Sciences, the plan of which he drew up himself. He would probably have lingered longer in those countries, but for the intelligence which he received concerning the conduct of his son Alexis, which induced him to hasten to St. Petersburg under the agitation of bitter feelings, in which the natural dispositions of the father were drawn into direct collision with the duty of the sovereign.

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tiring-woman shines through the whole of this saucy and superficial description. The margrave took the measure of the illustrious visitors as she would of her lady's robe — colour, spangles, and shape. It never occurred to her, that, in the little coarse woman who looked so like a German actress, she saw the heroine of the Pruth: and that the rude seaman who frightened the queen was the man who, amidst ignorant wonder and superstitious resistance, laid the foundations of the most gigantic empire that the world has ever seen! But the circumstances under which the margrave obtained her impressions were unfavourable to the formation of a just opinion, or, indeed, of any opinion at all. She was only eight years of age when she saw Peter and Catherine, although she had arrived at a mature age when she wrote her memoirs. She retained no more than the silly whispers and jests of the ante-chamber: she noted down what she heard rather than what she thought; but it serves to show very clearly the sort of atmosphere in which the eccentric Frederic moved, and the courtly weaknesses against which, in his own person, he must have been compelled to sustain a continual warfare.

CHAP. VI.

THE PRINCESS EUDOKHIA. — EDUCATION OF ALEXIS. — THE FACTION OF THE OLD MANNERS. — MARRIAGE OF ALEXIS. — DEATH OF HIS WIFE. — RUINOUS HABITS OF THE PRINCE. — FRUITLESS REMONSTRANCES OF THE CZAR. — DUPLICITY AND FLIGHT OF ALEXIS. — NEGOTIATIONS WITH HIS FATHER. — PETER PROMISES TO RECEIVE HIM WITH CLEMENCY. — RETURN OF ALEXIS TO MOSCOW. — INVESTIGATION INTO HIS OFFENCES, AND PUNISHMENT OF HIS ASSOCIATES. — HE IS REMOVED TO ST. PETERSBURGH. — TRIAL, CONDEMNATION, AND DEATH OF THE CZAROVITCH. — CHARGES AGAINST PETER EXAMINED. — GENERAL REFLECTIONS.

The czarovitch Alexis was twenty-nine years of age when Peter returned from his travels. He was heir to the throne by his birth, in the natural order of succession. The relation in which he stood to the sovereign, his own irregularities, and the violence with which his indiscretions had been treated by the czar, who seemed eager to punish in the son, after an interval of twenty years, the rebellious blood of his banished mother, surrounded the young prince with circumstances of intense interest. But, in order to afford a clear view of the whole case, which is one of the most extraordinary in the annals of history, it will be necessary to recapitulate the leading features of the events by which it was preceded, and with which it was connected.

The princess Eudokhia, a daughter of an ancient house, had been educated in the prejudices of her country, and, incapable, perhaps, of comprehending in their full extent the importance of those changes which the czar laboured to introduce amongst the people, she regarded improvement as innovation, and, without openly opposing the proceedings of her sovereign, she insensibly formed a party at court which thwarted the execution of his de-

signs. She belonged to the faction of the old manners. She disliked the association of foreigners, who were the agents and ministers of a reform that threatened to subvert the established usages, which were universally regarded with a feeling amounting to superstition. This was her first offence. It deprived her of the confidence of the czar; and, in so impetuous a nature, the transfer of the affections was an inevitable result. He had no sooner banished her from his presence, than he elevated another to her place. The intelligence of his infidelity reached her in her imprisonment, and she resolved to be revenged for the insult he cast upon her honour by compromising the honour of both. This fatal error was followed by a terrible vengeance. The czar impaled her paramour, repudiated her in solemn form, and condemned her to the cloisters for life.

The Russian clergy who, in the early stages of the new era, suffered the most severely under the improving hands of the czar, affected to commiserate the misfortunes of the princess, and secretly fed the discontents of the people by pretending to regard her as a martyr to her zeal on behalf of their ancient customs. The colouring of truth which this statement received from some of the actual circumstances which accompanied her repudiation obtained it a ready currency amongst the multitude, who were, for the greater part, so violently opposed to the civilisation which was forced upon them by the czar, that they willingly credited any assertions that gave them a fresh excuse for resistance. The czarovitch had received the first elements of his education under the guidance of his mother, and the councillors by whom she was surrounded. The impressions of his youth were therefore derived from that party which was constantly labouring to undermine the salutary measures of the czar; and they had taken entire possession of his mind before the banishment of his mother placed him, for the first time, under the sole government of his father. It must be admitted that, from the period when Peter's aversion to Eudokhia took the shape of a sub-

stantive act, and more especially from the day of his marriage with Catherine, he never exhibited much parental fondness for Alexis: but, although some historians have endeavoured to show that he neglected his education, and by that neglect exposed him to the temptations that ultimately seduced him to his ruin, yet those authorities that may be most safely relied upon concur in stating that the utmost care was bestowed upon the instruction of the prince, with a view to wean him from the dangerous principles he had imbibed from his mother and the priests. Nor is it probable that the czar, who recognised in Alexis the successor to a throne which it had cost him so much exertion to consolidate, could have been so imprudent as to commit the young prince designedly to perilous associations, which would incapacitate him for the high destiny to which, in the course of time, he was likely to be called: unless, indeed, we are to credit the revolting insinuation that the czar abandoned him to his fate for the sake of being enabled at last to found upon his conduct a charge that should affect his life. However the evil passions of that remarkable man may have afterwards hurried him into the adoption of a proceeding, in the sanguinary character of which the tenderness of the father and the mercy of the judge were equally absorbed, there is abundant and satisfactory proof of the fact that for many years, and in a variety of ways, he endeavoured to recall his son from the guilty excesses which marked his wayward and disobedient career, and which, if persisted in, must have unfitted him to reign over a mighty empire in a state of moral transition.

Removed from the influence of his mother, the young Alexis was placed under preceptors who were selected from amongst the most distinguished foreigners then to be found in Russia. But they vainly tried to obliterate from his mind the first impressions he had received. He was not deficient in capacity: he could speak and write the German language fluently; he acquired some proficiency in mathematics, and developed

an early taste for drawing. But the perusal of the ecclesiastical books which had been put into his hands by the priests rendered all attempts to draw him from his early convictions fruitless. In those books he believed he had found a reprobation of the labours in which his father was engaged. He confided in them, and was lost. The clergy had successfully persuaded him that the nation held the reforms of Peter in horror; that the frequent fits to which his father was subject must speedily terminate his life; and that, by showing to the people his aversion to the spirit of change, he would insure unbounded popularity upon his accession to the throne. He yielded himself up to these insidious counsels, and became a passive conspirator against the throne. That he never committed any positive act of rebellion — until, flying from the consequences of his own folly, he threw himself upon the compassion of a foreign power — may be assumed at once; but, in separating himself from the policy of the czar, he suffered the influence of his name to be employed as effectually against it as if he had taken a personal share in the discontents. It would appear as if he were equally unwilling to participate in either of the revolutions — that of the throne or of the ignorant masses; and that, to escape the responsibilities of action, he plunged into low intemperance. The marriage of the czar with Catherine in 1707, and the birth of a prince, evidently affected his spirits; but Peter adopted all the means in his power of redeeming him from the ruinous courses into which he was falling. He placed him at the head of the regency for a year, by way of experiment: he sent him to travel abroad; and finally, after the campaign of the Pruth, married him to a young princess of the house of Wolfenbuttel. But that marriage only drew out to a still greater extent the unfortunate propensities of a prince who, at the age of twenty-one, combined all the wild extravagance of the new with the stubborn grossness of the old manners. The unfortunate princess, ill-treated by her husband,

in want of the necessaries of life, and utterly destitute of consolation, died, under the weight of her miseries, on the 15th November, 1715. She bequeathed a son to the prince, who, in the natural order of inheritance, would be entitled to succeed to the throne.

Impressed with the melancholy fate of the young princess, and justly apprehensive that, after his death, the labours of his life might be destroyed by the evil dispositions of his own son, Peter wrote to Alexis in the mixed language of remonstrance and menace, expressing at once the feelings of the father and the offended authority of the sovereign. After reviewing the charges which common report had brought against him, and censuring the ruinous courses he was following, the czar concluded by saying that he would wait a little time to see if he would amend his life; but that if he did not, he would deprive him of the succession, and cut him off as a useless member: that he must not imagine the threat was meant merely to intimidate him, nor repose upon his title as eldest son; for if he did not spare his own life for his country, or the good of his people, why should he spare the life of his son? "I would prefer," he added, "to transmit the crown to an entire stranger who merited it, than to my own son who had proved himself unworthy of the trust." This letter was sufficiently admonitory, since it not only reproved the offences of the prince, but gave him plainly to understand that the order of the succession was not governed by any fundamental law, as in other kingdoms, but by the will of the czar, which was arbitrary, and that Peter was resolved to assert his right to dispose of an empire which he had founded himself.* The prince returned a brief reply, in which he renounced the crown for ever. "I take God to witness," he said, "and I swear upon my soul, that I will never lay claim to the succession. I put my children † into your hands, and

* Voltaire.
† Alexis had but one son by the princess; but he had also illegitimate offspring.

I ask for nothing more than subsistence during my life." To this curt communication, the czar transmitted a fuller and more decisive answer, with the clear determination to bring the question to issue at once. "I observe," said he, that "in your letter you speak only of the succession, as if I stood in need of your consent. I remonstrated with you upon the grief which your conduct has caused me during many years, and you do not speak of it. Paternal exhortations touch you not. I have resolved to write to you again, and for the last time. If you despise the opinions of your father while he is living, what will you not do after he is dead? Although you may at present intend to be faithful to your promises, those great beards will turn you to their purpose, and force you to violate your pledges. These people place their hopes but upon you. You have no gratitude for him who gave you birth. Have you assisted him in his labours since you came of age? Do you not blame, do you not detest, every thing I do for the good of my people? I have cause to believe that, if you should survive me, you will destroy all that I have done. Amend yourself, render yourself worthy of the succession, or become a monk. Reply, either in writing or in person, or I will deal with you as with a criminal." The acknowledgment of his misconduct which the czar was so desirous to obtain from Alexis, probably as a token of reformation, the prince was still unwilling to make; and, framing a pretence of illness, satisfied himself with replying to this letter in a few lines, stating that he intended to embrace the monastic life, and praying his majesty's gracious consent to that effect.

This resolution, sudden and suspicious as it was, appeared to satisfy the czar, for he immediately afterwards prepared to set out on his journey into Germany and France; a step which, at all events, proved that he did not entertain any serious apprehensions of a conspiracy on the part of his son whom he left behind him. Before he departed, however, he visited Alexis, who

affected to be in bad health, and conversed with him freely on the subject. The prince continuing to hold his resolution of adopting a monastic life, the czar, after representing to him the nature of the obligations he was about to undertake, recommended him to reflect upon his determination, and gave him six months to consider before he would accept his final answer. On the same day he left the capital with his consort; and that very night Alexis rose from his bed, and celebrated, in a banquet with his dissolute companions, the departure of his father.

An interval of seven months elapsed. The czar was still upon his travels, but never received a communication from his son. Chafed and disappointed at his neglect, he wrote to him again, desiring him to join him at Copenhagen, where he would arrive in time for the preparations for the ensuing campaign; or, adopting the alternative, appoint a day when he was to abjure the world. The czarovitch, acting under the advice of his bad counsellors, secretly resolved not to place himself in the power of his incensed father, but, still more afraid to avow his purpose, he transmitted an answer to the effect that he would meet the czar at Copenhagen. Under the pretext of setting out to join his father, he procured a considerable sum of money from Menzikoff to defray the expenses of the journey; but he had no sooner reached the borders of Livonia, than he turned off on the road to Vienna, and threw himself upon the protection of the emperor, Charles VI., with whom he intended to remain until the death of the czar. The emperor, however, while he did not hesitate to intercede with Peter on behalf of his disobedient son, was yet unwilling to shelter him at his court, and accordingly sent him to a fortress in the Tyrol, from whence Alexis afterwards removed, under an assumed name, to St. Elmo, a Neapolitan fortress. During these movements the czar diligently tracked his progress, and despatched two commissioners to the prince, — M. Tolstoi, a privy councillor, and captain Romanzoff, of the guards,—with

a letter dated from Spa, the 10th of July, 1717. The letter was conceived in these terms:—"I write to you, that you may execute my will, which Tolstoi and Romanzoff will announce to you. If you obey me, I assure you, and I promise before God, that I will not punish you, but that if you return I will love you better than ever: but if you do not, I give you, in virtue of the power I have received from God, as your father, my eternal curse; and, as your sovereign, I assure you that I shall find the means to punish you, in which I hope God will assist me, and take my just cause in hand." This promise of pardon was also made to the emperor and the king of Naples, who, in consequence, used their influence with Alexis to induce him to yield to his father's wishes. In addition to their entreaties, Tolstoi* corrupted the mistress of Alexis by bribes and flattery; and the czarovitch was at length persuaded to return to Moscow, which he reached on the 13th of February, 1718.

On the evening of his arrival the czar had a long interview with him, and it was generally believed that the prince had received a full pardon from his father; but on the following morning the great bell of Moscow was tolled, and the regiments of guards were ordered under arms. The members of the senate, the boyards, and privy councillors, were summoned to the chateau; while the bishops, archimandrites, the superior clergy, and professors of divinity, were assembled in the cathedral. Alexis, deprived of his sword, was conducted as a prisoner to the castle, into the presence of his father, before whom he prostrated himself, delivering into his hands

* This Tolstoi was the basest minister at the court of Peter. A part of his youth had been spent in Naples, and he was the most eloquent and least scrupulous man in Russia. On one occasion Peter sent to Constantinople, and transmitted him 200,000 ducats in gold to buy over the divan. Tolstoi embezzled the greater part of the money, and to prevent the secretary to the embassy from impeaching him, he put him into prison. Peter was well aware of his ability and his vices. He used to say of him, "Tolstoi is in all respects a very able man; but whoever has anything to do with him should be sure to have a good large stone in his pocket, to knock out his teeth, in case he should be taken with a fit of biting." Peter II. condemned him to be beheaded, but changed the sentence to banishment into Archangel, where he died. See TOOKE, *passim*.

at the same time a paper, in which he acknowledged his errors, declared his unworthiness to inherit the crown, and prayed that mercy might be shown to his life. The czar raised him from his knees, and, leading him into a cabinet, put a number of questions to him, the general purport of which is conjectured to have had reference to his accomplices in the conspiracy of opinion — for it must be observed that it was never resolved into action — against the new order of things. He shortly after returned with the prince into the council chamber, and, in the presence of the assembly, he read a public declaration which he had previously prepared for the occasion. In this declaration, he commenced by reproving his son for his indolence, and neglect of his studies; for associating with the partisans of the ancient manners; for his bad conduct to his wife, and his violation of conjugal fidelity in forming a connection with a low-born woman during her life-time*; for placing himself under the protection of the emperor of Germany, and calumniating his father by declaring that his life was not safe if he returned to Russia; and for asking the emperor to defend him by force of arms. These charges against the czarevitch were followed by a solemn declaration of disinheritance, which, after a recital of the flight and calumnies of the prince, crimes deserving death, but which "fatherly affection" had forgiven, the language of the imperial accuser ran as follows:—

* Euphrosina, the mistress of Alexis, was a woman of mean extraction, and a captive of Finland. Their connection was productive of some children, which will explain the meaning of the prince's letter to the czar, in which he asks protection for his offspring in the plural number — the unfortunate princess having had but one son. In consequence of the evidence given by Euphrosina upon the trial of Alexis, that she had prevailed on him to return to Moscow, and that she had conformed to the Russian faith, and was privately married to the prince — which may be unhesitatingly declared to be a falsehood, — she was not only set at liberty, but the jewels of the czarovitch were restored to her, and a handsome fortune was appointed to her out of the public treasury. See Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce, London, 1782. "It is true," observes Voltaire, "that Peter himself had repudiated his wife in favour of a captive, but that captive was a woman of superior merit: Alexis, on the contrary, had neglected his wife for a young and obscure stranger, who had no merit but her beauty." This, however, was but the fault of a young man, which a father ought to censure, but might pardon.

"But, considering his unworthiness and his dissolute conduct, we cannot, in conscience, leave to him the succession to the throne, it being too evident that his depravity would destroy the glory of the nation, and lose all the provinces we have recovered by our arms. If we were to place our subjects under such a successor, it would throw them back into a worse state than they have ever been in before. Accordingly, by our paternal power, in virtue of which, agreeably to the laws of our empire, every subject can, if it please him, disinherit his son, and in virtue of the prerogative of sovereign prince, and in consideration of the good of our country, we deprive our said son Alexis of the succession after us to our throne of Russia, because of his crimes and his unworthiness, even though there should not exist after us a single person of our family. And we constitute and declare our second son Peter to be our successor to the said throne, although he is yet young, there not being a successor of a more advanced age."

To this act of disinheritance and ordinance of succession was added a paternal malediction against Alexis, in the event of the assumption on his part, at any time, of a claim to the throne; a demand from all the authorities, secular and ecclesiastical, and the people at large, that they should acknowledge Peter as the lawful successor; and a declaration denouncing as traitors to the czar and the country all persons who should dare to consider Alexis as the successor to the crown. When the reading of this document — which had evidently been drawn up with extraordinary rapidity — was concluded, the czavoritch upon his side signed the act of renunciation, in which he bound himself by an oath to submit wholly to his father's will, and never to seek the succession, claim nor accept it under any pretence whatever; acknowledging his brother, at the same time, as the lawful successor to the throne. When these instruments were completed, the czar took them in person to the cathedral, where they were read a second time to the ecclesiastics assembled there, who signified their approbation, and

signed their names at the foot of another copy. An oath, recognising both the renunciation and the order of succession, was afterwards administered to the army and navy at home and abroad, and to every subject of the Russian empire.*

The whole of this proceeding was conducted in the most regular and impressive manner. The declaration, as explicit in its language as it was decisive in its object, was rendered doubly authentic, as an authoritative act, not merely by the exercise of the right which the law vested in the father over the son, but by the acquiescence of the son himself, and the approbation and testimony of all the officers of state. But the renunciation of the throne by Alexis was not a voluntary act: it was imposed upon him under circumstances that deprived him of the freedom of choice. He was forced to obey the mandate of an arbitrary sovereign, who derived even less authority from the law, which placed his decision above appeal, than from his own will, which was absolute over the law itself. He did not sign the renunciation as a prince coming forward to sacrifice his inheritance for the good of his country, but as a prisoner compelled to sacrifice his rights to preserve his life. "Never," exclaims a modern historian †, "was prince disinherited in so authentic a manner." The authenticity of the disinheritance cannot be questioned. The Czar possessed a legal right to disinherit his son, without, as he informed him in one of his letters, even asking his consent; nor can it be denied that the prince had full warning of the intentions of his father, nor that the act of disinheritance was a just and necessary consequence of his disobedience. But the czar had

* Memoirs of Bruce

† Voltaire, who justifies the whole of Peter's conduct towards Alexis on the ground that the question lay between the welfare of 18,000,000 of (calculated, *en passant*, by M. Hassel to have reached, in 1823, to upwards of 59,000,000!) and a single person Voltaire loses sight of the moral altogether, and thinks only of the political necessity, which, after all, does not appear to have been so very pressing Ségur, between his admiration of the magnanimity of the sovereign and his horror of the cruelty of the father, seems to have been sadly perplexed as to which way he ought to decide. He has two chapters on the subject, which, like Rousseau's arguments on suicide, *pour et contre*, pretty nearly balance each other.

solemnly pledged himself, that if the prince would return, he would not only pardon him, but love him better than ever; yet, on the very morning after his return, the prince, degraded by the deprivation of his sword, and led as a prisoner into the council chamber, was suddenly called upon to put his hand to a deed by which he not only surrendered his inheritance, but resigned it into the hands of his younger brother. The spirit in which this extreme measure was fulfilled involved a violent infraction of the promise upon the faith of which Alexis had returned to Russia, and exposed the motives of the czar to a suspicion of injustice of the worst kind, which is greatly strengthened, if not altogether confirmed, by the proceedings he subsequently adopted against the prince. Alexis had not committed any new offence to justify the revocation of his father's lenity, and it was not necessary to the validity of the transaction that he should be compelled to resign, as a prisoner, those rights which he had already forfeited as a prince. If, however, the personal humiliation of the son might have been considered by the father as a wholesome warning, and might have been resorted to with a view of impressing upon him still more seriously the obligation of the act, it would naturally be expected that the restraint would cease with the occasion that called it forth, and that the prince, having executed his father's will to the utmost, would be restored to liberty. But that was not the case. He was carried from the assembly amidst which he had renounced the throne to a prison, and there kept in close confinement, nobody being permitted to have access to him except the count Tolstoi, and such persons as were appointed by the czar to see him. *

The pretext for this proceding was two-fold — a pretext which was not put into an affirmative shape, but which is drawn from the body of facts preceding and following the imprisonment of the czarovitch. In the first instance, Peter apprehended that Alexis, whose

* Bruce.

mind was weak and easily worked upon, might again become the agent of the factious party that resisted his improvements, and might by them be induced to revoke a renunciation that had been wrung from him in the first hour of his submission to the parental and imperial authority, and thus, perhaps, precipitate a civil war in which the results of his laborious life might be overthrown. In the second place, Peter, with his usual sagacity and promptitude, saw the necessity of crushing the disaffection of which the prince was the *passive* instrument, of ascertaining at once the names of the conspirators and the extent of the conspiracy, and of making an immediate example which should strike terror to the adherents of the old party. In order to obtain the information he required, he considered it necessary to place the prince in confinement, to hold a constant inquisition over him for the purpose of extorting a full confession, and to threaten him with capital punishment if he concealed or mis-stated any facts that were within his knowledge. This severe procedure constituted a second and still worse infringement of the promised clemency of the czar. The offences of the prince — the boldest of which was his flight into Germany, and his attempt to disturb the amicable relations that existed between Peter and Charles — were known to the czar at the time he proffered mercy to him on condition that he would return to Moscow. Alexis fulfilled the condition on his side, and had a clear title to the protection which was guaranteed to him by his father's word. Yet he had no sooner submitted himself to the paternal will, than, instead of being received with forgiveness, he was at once treated as a criminal. In the whole course of these acts, we detect, step by step, one violation of good faith after another. The original alternative which the czar placed before his son was that he should reform, and render himself worthy of the succession, or embrace the monastic life. The choice had never been withdrawn from the prince; and, when he renounced the throne, the utmost penalty that the czar

would have been justified in exacting was to compel him to enter a monastery. He could have been interrogated in his cell with as much effect as in the keep of a fortress. But, perhaps, Peter did not like to trust him within the reach of priestly influence; which, however, he ought to have taken into consideration before, and which, even magnified as the danger was by his fears, did not afford a sufficient excuse for so deliberate an act of perfidy. In any case, the character of the inquiry, the means and agents employed, and the daily trials to which Alexis was subjected, tended to pervert and agonise him rather than to promote the discovery of truth. The terror which such an ordeal was calculated to inspire, in a mind naturally timid and shallow, could scarcely be expected to produce results favourable to the ends of justice. Under the horrors of such a situation, hurried into confessions with the prospect of death before him, depressed by the solitude of a dungeon, and harassed by the crafty suggestions and tortuous investigations of Tolstoi and his associates in the commission, the prince, as might have been anticipated, rendered a confused account of every thing he recollected, criminated himself in the vain hope of saving his life, and, as a desperate concession to the unrelenting sovereign, even attested the correctness of statements which he knew to be false, but which, he thought, the czar wished him to testify, because they implicated individuals who were obnoxious to him.

The prince was compelled to swear, before the altar, on the Holy Evangelists, that he would discover every thing, and confess the whole and pure truth as before God, and without disguise. He was then juridically interrogated, first by his father, and afterwards by the commissioners. A number of questions were placed before him, which he was called upon to answer in writing. One of them related to a letter written from St. Petersburg, after the prince's elopement, by M. Beyer, the emperor's resident there, in which a rumour was related of a meeting that was said to have taken

place in the Russian army in Mecklenburgh; and of a design entertained by several officers of sending Catherine and her son to the prison where the repudiated czarina was confined, and placing Alexis upon the throne. This letter, which bore the character of mere diplomatic gossip, was not addressed to Alexis, but a copy of it had been sent to him at Vienna. Unconcerned as he was in the report, which was, probably, fabricated with a view to produce the event to which it referred, the czar founded a question upon it as to whether, under such circumstances, he would not have declared for the rebels even in his father's life-time. In civilised countries, where judicial investigations are conducted with a tender regard to the consciences and personal security of witnesses, such a question, leading directly to self-examination, never would have been put: but the czar raised himself not only above the forms of European law, but above the provisions of the laws he had himself established*; and, anxious only to attain his end, was indifferent whether the means he used were equitable or iniquitous. The prince, labouring under some inexplicable infatuation, replied, in writing, that had the rebels invited him in the life-time of the czar, he should probably have joined them, had they been strong enough.

But a still more serious charge was brought against him: a charge more dangerous, as it affected him personally, and sustained by proofs of a kind that could not be set aside. Minutes of two letters, written by him from Vienna to the senators and archbishops of Russia, were discovered in his own hand, one of which contained the following passage: — "The continual bad treatment which I have undeservedly suffered, obliged me to fly: I narrowly escaped being shut up in a convent. They who confined my mother would have treated me in the same way. I am under the protection of a great prince: I pray of you not to abandon me at present." The concluding words, *at present*, which

* See Peter's Code, or Concordance, of the Laws, ch. vi.

might be construed as having a seditious tendency, had been crossed out with a pen, afterwards restored, and again crossed out: affording a sufficient proof of the state of mental trouble and vacillation under which the epistles were written. These letters never reached their destination, but were intercepted by the court of Vienna, which was unwilling to embroil itself with that of Russia, and still more reluctant to countenance the revolt of the son against the father.

Accumulated testimonies were gathered in all quarters, and the prince, in the agitation of his feelings, knew not whether it were better to admit or deny the accusations that were brought against him. The confessions thus extorted from a young man of feeble intellect were not, therefore, wholly to be relied upon; nor were the witnesses who came forward to implicate him quite free from suspicion. A person of the name of Afanassief deposed that he had heard the prince declare, on one occasion, "I will say something to the bishops, and they will repeat it to the priests, and the priests to their parishioners; and I shall be placed upon the throne, even if it be against my own will." This loose charge was strengthened by the evidence of his own mistress, Euphrosina, who stated that he had complained to her of his father, and expressed himself anxious for his death. But no digested project or secret intrigue, neither conspiracy nor preparation, were proved; and a sentiment uttered in confidence, and natural enough in a son who inherited a vast monarchy, and who had experienced but little of his father's affection, was converted into a crime upon the testimony of a depraved woman, whose criminal life rendered her statements unworthy of credit, even if they were not made still more questionable by the motives of self-preservation in which they originated. It was not, however, sufficient that the czarovitch alone should be pronounced an enemy to the government of the czar. He was charged with having consulted his mother and the princess Mary respecting his flight: and the bishop of Rostof, who was in their

confidence, deposed that the princesses, then prisoners in a convent, hoped for a change that should give them their liberties, which was not very extraordinary; and that they had counselled the prince to make his escape into Germany, instead of going to join his father at Copenhagen. And to such extremities were the investigations carried, that a priest named Jacques was put to the torture, for the purpose of forcing him to betray the secrets which the prince had confided to him in the confessional. Jacques admitted that Alexis had accused himself before God of wishing for the death of his father; and that he, the confessor, had consoled him for the sin by saying that God would forgive him, as it was no more than what the whole nation wished. The spectacle of a confessor accusing his penitent, and the penitent accused by his mistress, the ordinances of the church violated on the one hand, and the sympathies of humanity outraged on the other, was as revolting as it was inconsistent. In the Greek church, as in the Latin, the confessional is held sacred, and secrets reposed in the priest are not admissible as evidence in a court of justice. But Peter appears to have broken down all the obstacles which divine as well as human law raised up in the progress of an inquiry which, thus prosecuted, could not fail to terminate in the ruin of the accused.

That Alexis, confounded at all points, should have been frightened into admissions that compromised his life, was not surprising. But that his private thoughts, the communion of the sinner with his Creator, and the half-formed hopes which had, from time to time, found a place in his mind, should have been urged against him as grave political offences, must have staggered even the inquisitors themselves. It was the first time that, under any solemn form of inquiry, the secret sentiments of an accused person were made the groundwork of an impeachment.

When sufficient evidence was collected to enable the czar to bring the accomplices of the prince's crimes to punishment, he lost no time in satisfying his revenge.

The late czarina, and the princess Mary, were removed to distant places, and confined with increased rigour. Glebof, the paramour of the czarina, was impaled alive. The corpse was elevated on a scaffold in the centre of a square space apportioned for the purpose before the castle gate; and at the corners the heads of the czarina's brother, of two bishops, and the first commissioner of the admiralty, were displayed on the tops of poles: at the same time a ghastly exhibition of the heads of numerous companions of the unfortunate czarovitch, amongst whom were fifty priests and monks, surrounded the scaffold on a circle of trunks of trees. During this sanguinary interval, Moscow was kept in a stage of siege. The citizens were not permitted to leave it under pain of death; and were compelled, in the suspicious temper of the time, to act as spies and informers upon each other.

While these executions were going forward, the unhappy Alexis, insulated from counsel and from succour, remained trembling with horror in his prison. His judgment was paralysed by fear; his fortitude, and almost his reason, forsook him. But worse calamities still awaited him. As soon as the measure of vengeance was full, the czar removed him to St. Petersburg, where the interrogation was renewed in a still more specific spirit. Quailing under a persecution that nearly deprived him of the power of collecting his thoughts, it was not surprising that he should at last have been betrayed into statements which were not only inconsistent in themselves, but which confessed the treasonable designs that had not yet been satisfactorily proved against him. It seemed as if, weary of life, he was willing to make any admissions that were likely to bring his sufferings to a termination.

During the inquiry which had been held at Moscow in the month of February, he was closely examined respecting the negotiations that passed between him and the emperor, and certain conversations which were alleged to have taken place in his interviews with the count Schonbron. On that occasion, Alexis deposed

that he did not see the emperor, but that he applied to count Schonbron, who said to him that "the emperor would not forsake him, and that, when the proper season arrived, after the death of his father, he would assist him with an armed force to ascend the throne." To this communication, the prince replied that "*that* was not what he asked; and that all he desired was, that the emperor would be pleased to grant him his protection." This statement bears internal evidences of truth. Nothing could be more unlikely than that Alexis should have made so wild and absurd a proposition to the emperor or his minister, as that of asking the assistance of his troops to dethrone the czar: and the course adopted by the emperor, in granting him an asylum without sanctioning his presence at court, is a sufficient proof of the light in which he regarded the disobedience of the prince. The message conveyed by count Schonbron was in all respects natural: it merely held out a hope to Alexis that the emperor would, after the death of Peter, recognise the prince's right of inheritance to the throne in such a way as circumstances might render necessary; but it did not even remotely point to any act of revolution against the established authority of the czar. Such a contingent promise was, indeed, no more than the existing relationships of the two empires justified; for it must be observed, that at that time Alexis had not forfeited his lineal claims, either by renunciation on his own part, or by any declaratory or formal act on the part of his father.

When the interrogations, however, were resumed four months afterwards in St. Petersburg, this subject was revived, and a rigid inquisition instituted into all the particulars. Whether the prince lost his recollection of the facts as he had before stated them, whether he had gradually accustomed himself to believe in the truth of assertions which were constantly put before him in the shape of affirmative queries, or whether his answer was extorted from his fears or from his resentment, it is not easy to determine; but certain it is, that upon the re-

newal of the investigation, he gave in a statement in writing which varied considerably from his first explanation. That statement was to the following effect:— "Wishing to imitate my father in nothing, I sought to obtain the succession by every means except good conduct. I was willing to secure it by foreign assistance; and if I had secured it, and the emperor had put into execution *the promise which he made to me* — that he would procure for me the crown of Russia even by force of arms, — I would have spared nothing to secure myself in the succession. For example, if the emperor had required an exchange of troops for his service, or a large sum of money, I would have willingly done every thing he wished, and have given great presents to his ministers and generals. I would have supported, at my own expense, the auxiliary troops with which he might have assisted me to put me in possession of the crown of Russia; and, in a word, nothing should have prevented me from accomplishing my object." The most remarkable feature in this statement is its frank avowal of the secret feelings which Alexis entertained towards his father, and which, we must suppose, was wrung from him under a promise of mercy, of which we have no evidence, or extracted from his terrors. That Alexis should have made a gratuitous acknowledgment of the undivulged rebellion of his thoughts solely for the purpose of defying or insulting the czar, in revenge for the harassing proceedings to which he had subjected him, appears, for many reasons, to be improbable. The severity of Peter's character was well known to his son, who, when he had less cause of apprehension, fled from his country to avoid a meeting, the consequences of which he dreaded more than the penalties of proscription; while the recent executions which had taken place in Moscow must have made such an impression upon the mind of the prince, as to have increased his fears, rather than to have inspired him with boldness. It was not likely that he would have availed himself of such a time to commit so extraordinary an outrage upon

the feelings of the sovereign and the father, unless the unhappy prisoner had been tempted into it by despair. But that part of this disclosure which involves the most curious point for consideration is the passage relative to the promise of the emperor. In February, he stated that the emperor had expressed his willingness to assist him in securing his succession to the throne after the death of his father; and in the July following, departing from the simple relation of a plain and direct fact, we find him putting, by insinuation, a wider construction upon the words of the emperor, so as to make it appear not only that he entertained a design upon the throne during the life-time of his father, but that the emperor was not indisposed to aid him in its prosecution. The declaration, it is true, does not distinctly assert that such was the emperor's intention, or that the communication of count Schonbrun was susceptible of such an interpretation; but, in describing what he would have done had he succeeded in his object, and had the emperor put into execution the promise he had made him, he leaves it to be inferred that the emperor's promise bore reference, not to a future event which had not even yet taken place, but to the period when the prince was actually meditating a revolution against the throne. This discrepancy in his statements seems to have brought the investigation to a close. Peter had commanded him to make a full confession of the names of all the accomplices of his elopement, and the prince had, perhaps from sentiments of mercy or of honour, concealed some of them. This circumstance, and the strange variance that existed between the disclosures made in the first and the second investigations, determined Peter to bring his son before a solemn tribunal, composed of the great officers of state, the judges, and the bishops, to indict him for high treason, and to leave the decision of the case in their hands. He accordingly convoked an assembly of the grandees of Russia on the 24th June, 1718, and, addressing them in person, took upon himself the office of accuser of his son. It would hardly

lead to any profitable conclusion, to discuss the subtle doctrine which a modern historian has laid down in reference to this extraordinary trial. If the question really lay between the life of one individual and the safety of an empire, political expediency would pronounce a sentence that would be irreconcileable with Christian equity. This is the only ground upon which the conduct of Peter will admit of justification — if, indeed, there be any justification for making a state necessity paramount to domestic obligations, and those immutable principles of justice which regulate the punishment by the measure of the offence. But we must not venture to judge of the actions of this monarch by a reference either to the laws of any other nation, or to any abstract code of right and wrong. He was the apostle of a mighty reformation. He stood alone against the prejudices, the ancient customs, and the superstitions of his subjects. Had he observed a strict system of morals in legislation, and in his heroic resistance to the popular will; or, rather, had he not constantly sacrificed minor considerations of that nature in his efforts to accomplish the great object to which he dedicated his life, he certainly never would have succeeded in reclaiming Russia from the state of barbarism in which he found her, and linking her in spirit, in knowledge, and by national treaties, to the states of Europe. With reference, however, to the case of the unfortunate prince Alexis, the historian is spared the painful task of analysing the mere legal propriety of the proceedings adopted by the czar; for, by the law of Russia, the sovereign, in common with all parents, possessed the dangerous, but incontestable, right of life or death of his son. Peter, therefore, did not infringe the law of the country: he calmly availed himself of the fatal jurisdiction which was reposed in his hands. Posterity will not accuse the monarch of having strained any legal principle, or of having perverted any legal right, to achieve his purpose; but it will unhesitatingly condemn the father for having resorted to a prerogative which he was not enforced to employ, and which it

would have well become him to have relinquished. He was superior to his age, but was not always magnanimous in the exercise of those powers with which he was invested by nature and by his position.

It was a spectacle of surpassing humility and irresistible pathos to see, before that solemn gathering of the nobles and senators of the empire, on the one side a prince, the lineal heir to the throne, arraigned as a criminal; wasted and haggard from long confinement and constant persecution; his lofty stature bent down by illness and despair; his powerful voice so reduced, that its tones could not be recognised by his former friends; and his whole appearance so degraded, that those who knew him best could not trace in that macilent figure a single resemblance to the once wild and profligate czarovitch* :—on the other side, the sovereign and the father, standing up alone to address† the assembly and to denounce his son, already half a tenant of the grave; his large and robust form stooping slightly under the weight of years and care; his dark face and eagle features stamped with the stern expression of concentrated wrath and judicial rigour, — affording a strange contrast to the victim of his offended will. The speech of the czar embraced a narrative of all the topics connected with the life of the prince.‡ He related all those circumstances from the beginning, stating that the prince married for the purpose of evading the observation of his father; that he was the cause of his wife's death by ill-treatment, and that, in consequence, the new tie which Russia had formed with European civilisation was thus unpropitiously dissolved. He added, that, great as was his own joy in the success of his arms and domestic reforms, it was overbalanced by the still deeper sorrow which he felt at the profligate conduct of his son. He then proceeded thus: — "Though, by all laws, human and divine, and particularly by the laws of

* Bruce. † Levesque, Le Clerc, Manifesto of the trial, &c.

‡ Of this speech we have different versions, in some of which we find passages that are omitted in others. The outline given above embraces all the material points of each.

Russia, which give an absolute jurisdiction to fathers over their children, even in private life, we have a full and unlimited power in pronouncing sentence upon our son for the crimes he has committed, without consulting the opinions of any persons whatsoever; yet, as men are more liable to be affected by partialities and prejudices in their own affairs than in the affairs of others, and as the most skilful and experienced physicians trust not to their own judgment concerning themselves, but call in the assistance of others, so we, under the fear of God, and the dread of offending against his will, in the same manner place our disease before you, and apply to you for a cure; being apprehensive of eternal death, if, in ignorance of the nature of our distemper, we should attempt to cure ourselves; the more especially as, in a solemn appeal to Heaven, we have signed, sworn, and confirmed a promise of pardon to our son in case he should declare the whole truth. And, although he has cancelled this promise by holding in reserve the most important circumstances of his revolutionary designs against us; yet, that we may not violate our own obligations, we desire you to consider this affair with gravity and attention, and report to us what punishment you think he deserves, without favour or partiality either to him or to us. Should you decide that he deserves but a slight punishment, your decision will not be unwelcome to us; and we pledge ourselves, by the great Lord, you shall have nothing to apprehend. Be not influenced by the reflection that you are called upon to pass sentence on the son of your sovereign, but administer justice fearlessly, without respect of persons; and peril not your own souls and ours by doing anything which would be calculated to injure our country, or to upbraid our conscience on the terrible day of judgment."

Such was the address of the czar to the judges. He also transmitted a manifesto to the clergy, containing declarations to the same purpose. This manifesto concluded with these words: — "Although this affair does

not come within the spiritual, but rather the civil, jurisdiction, and we have this day brought it before the secular court; yet, recollecting that passage in the Word of God which requires us to consult the heads and elders of the church, that we may be informed in the will of Heaven, and being anxious of receiving all possible instruction on so important an occasion, we desire of you, the bishops and the whole ecclesiastical power, as propounders of the Word of God, not to pronounce any judgment in this case, but to examine it, and give us your opinions according to the sacred oracles, from which we may be best instructed as to the punishment our son deserves; which opinions you will deliver to us in writing under your hands, so that, being rightly informed therein, we may not lay any burden upon our conscience. We, therefore, repose implicit confidence in you, that, as guardians of the divine laws, as faithful pastors of the Christian flock, and as promoters of your country's good, you will act with dignity suited to your station; and we conjure you, by that dignity and the holiness of the functions you discharge, to proceed without fear or dissimulation."

In reply to these appeals, the clergy were the first to deliver their opinion. Their answer was in many respects remarkable. The preamble opened by a declaration that the affair did not come within the ecclesiastical jurisdiction: — "This affair," they observe, "does in no wise fall within the verge of the ecclesiastical court; nor is the absolute power of the sovereign subject to the cognisance of his people, but he has an unlimited right of acting herein as he shall think fit, without any inferior person being justified in intermeddling." It will be perceived that, in this preamble, the clergy did not satisfy themselves by merely declaring that the case did not come within the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, but that they went out of their way, and beyond the requisition of the czar, in reminding the sovereign that the law had placed an irresponsible power in his hands. Immediately after the preamble, followed several citations

of texts from Scripture, by which the evidence of Holy Writ was made to balance both sides of the question. They particularly cited that passage from Leviticus, containing the anathema, "Cursed be he who curseth his father or mother;" and the Gospel of St. Matthew, in which the denunciation is repeated. In addition to these authorities, they referred to the constitutions of the empire (which were out of their province) for analagous passages bearing in a similar spirit on the case. After a variety of quotations of this kind, the document terminated in the following words: — "If his majesty is disposed to punish the delinquent according to the measure of his offences, he has before him the examples of the Old Testament: if, on the other hand, he is inclined to show mercy, he has an example in our Lord Jesus Christ, who received back the prodigal son when he returned with a contrite heart; who set free the woman taken in adultery, whom the law had sentenced to be stoned to death; and who at all times delighted in mercy more than in sacrifice. He has likewise the example of David, who spared his son Absalom, although he had rebelled against him; who recommended him to the captains of his army when going forth to battle, saying, 'Spare my son Absalom!' The father was here inclinable to mercy, but divine justice spared not the offender. The heart of the czar is in the hands of God; let him take that side to which it shall please the Almighty to direct him." This paper was signed by eight archbishops and bishops, four archpriests, and two professors of divinity, as well as by the metropolitan archbishop of Rezan, with whom the prince had held a correspondence, and who was the first person by whom it was signed. The tendency of this answer of the clergy has been generally considered favourable to clemency, and much admiration has been bestowed upon the body from which it emanated.* But we must dis-

* Voltaire, who rarely found an excuse for praising the acts of the clergy approves highly of the tone of this document. A modern English compiler of the life of Peter the Great adopts the same opinion, without being influenced by the same motives.

sent wholly from a criticism so superficial. If the clergy had been sincerely disposed to impress upon the mind of the czar a merciful construction of the case, and if they had been sufficiently courageous to have tendered such an opinion unreservedly, it is quite clear that their answer would have been very differently prepared. The fact seems to be, that they were afraid of committing themselves to one side or the other: and that, in order to escape all responsibility, they placed a sufficient number of examples, bearing both ways, before the czar, so that whichever course his majesty might ultimately pursue should be justified by satisfactory precedents. The reforms that Peter had effected in the church had already rendered the clergy subservient to his will: they felt that they were no longer an independent body: their arrogance, which formerly had kept the throne in awe, was now sunk into servility; and it is, therefore, not surprising, that, thus called upon to give an opinion on a question respecting which it is scarcely assuming too much to say that the czar's mind was already made up, or had, at all events, exhibited so strong a feeling against the prince as to warrant them in believing that he desired to punish, and not to spare, his son — it is not surprising that they should have submitted so equivocal a statement to his majesty. But it is a source of no slight surprise, that any commentators on this event should have traced to the Christian benevolence of those ecclesiastics a document which was dictated by their fear.

On the same day the czarovitch was examined for the last time, and signed a final confession, in writing, in which he acknowledged himself to have been a bigot in his youth; to have frequented the company of monks and priests; to have revelled with them, and to have imbibed from them his aversion to the duties of his station, and his dislike to the person of his father: admitting, at the same time, that he had endeavoured to secure to himself the succession to the throne by any means whatever, except such as were just. It is utterly impos-

sible to reconcile the weakness of this extraordinary declaration with any other view of the subject than that which we have taken. The prince's mind had been worked upon, until he had lost the power of thinking for himself; and the confessions he made throughout were evidently extracted from his terrors: portions of them must have been false. On the 5th of July, the ministers, senators, and generals unanimously condemned prince Alexis to death. In this sentence the judges, after reciting in general terms the nature of the charge, and of the evidence submitted to them, go on to declare that, "according to the laws of Russia, it belongs not to them, the natural subjects of his majesty, to take cognisance of an affair of this nature, which for its importance depends solely on the absolute will of the sovereign, whose power, unlimited by any law, is derived from God alone." They then proceed to set forth the several articles of the charge, to justify the judgment at which they had arrived, by showing how much greater was the prince's crime than were others that would have subjected him to similar punishment; and, after pronouncing the verdict of death, they conclude by reposing the case in the hands of his majesty. "We submit, however," they observed, "this sentence which we now pass to the sovereign power, the will, and merciful revisal of his czarish majesty, our most gracious sovereign." This sentence is of the same character as the opinion delivered by the clergy. The senators comprehended the wishes of the czar, and they obeyed them. Peter required a legal sanction to release him from his promise to Alexis: he knew the materials of which the regency chamber was composed: he appealed to it, confident of the result; and the servile senate unhesitatingly performed the bidding of their master.

The czarovitch was removed from the court on the evening of the 6th of July: on the morning of the 7th, messengers were sent to the czar, to inform him that his son was dangerously ill, and desired to see him. Peter went accordingly, attended by the principal offi-

cers of his court; and, after an interview which is described to have been very affecting, took his leave. In the evening, however, another message was sent to the czar, stating that the illness of the prince had seriously increased; and as his majesty was on his way to visit him again, intelligence was received that the prince was dead. Such are the few particulars concerning this event which have been communicated to the world through the channels of the court. The czar, with a strong desire to justify his conduct to the nations of Europe, caused the whole trial to be printed and translated, thereby submitting himself to the judgment of the world.* In a letter which he addressed to the several courts of Europe, explaining the grounds upon which he brought his son to public trial, he gives the following account of the last moments of the prince. "While," he observed, "we were debating between the natural feelings of paternal clemency and the duties we owed to the security of our kingdom, and while we were pondering on what resolution we ought to take in an affair of such difficulty and importance, it pleased the Almighty God, by his especial will and his just judgment, and by his mercy, to deliver us out of that embarrassment, and to save our family and kingdom from the shame and the dangers, by abridging yesterday the life of our said son Alexis, after an illness with which he was seized as soon as he had heard the sentence of death pronounced against him. That illness appeared at first like an apoplexy, but he afterwards recovered his senses, and received the holy sacrament as a Christian; and having desired to see us, we went to him immediately, with all our councillors and senators, and then he acknowledged and sincerely confessed all his said faults

* *Memoires du Regne de Pierre le Grand, &c. par le Boyar Iwan Nestesuranoi.* This work was published one year after the death of Peter the Great, and while Catherine and Menzikoff were still living; and contains a variety of authentic facts. Voltaire condemns it as being an imposition, although he is largely indebted to it for the arrangement and substance of his own Life of Peter: indeed, in many places he derives even his language from Nestesuranoi. The only imposition — if it be one — which can be charged upon the work is, that it has a fictitious name Nestesuranoi is an anagram; the real name of the writer was Jean Rousset.

and crimes committed against us, with tears and all the marks of a true penitent, and begged our pardon, which, according to Christian and paternal duty, we granted him; after which, on the 7th of July, at six in the evening, he surrendered his soul to God."*

This account of the prince's death has been currently adopted by most historians, and generally accepted as being strictly true. We shall have occasion presently to show, upon evidence which, after a careful examination of the facts, appears to us to be unquestionable, that although this statement was received at the time by the courts of Europe as a satisfactory explanation of the sudden demise of the prisoner, it is exposed to the most serious doubts, if, indeed, it be not completely disproved, by testimonies that have been made public subsequently. But, before we touch upon that part of the subject, it is necessary to observe that, shortly after the event took place, a variety of stories crept into circulation, many of which imputed the death of Alexis to his father, and all of which denied that he died a natural death. As, however, those various and conflicting charges could not all be true, and as none of them rested upon authentic information, they cannot be admitted as historical evidence. It was well known that the prince Alexis entertained a feeling of strong hostility against the czarina; yet we have not been able to discover that the latter was implicated, in any direct way, in the proceedings against the prince. A foreign writer †, whose statements upon this subject are allowed on all hands to have been remarkably impartial and correct, put forward an extraordinary narrative of the circumstances which attended the last hours of the prince, that not only accused the czar of the murder of his son, but drew in the czarina as a participator in the act. The narrative to which we allude represents the czarina to have been so

* "The History of the Life of Peter the First, by John Mottley, Esq." This work, written by the son of Colonel Mottley, who followed the fortunes of James II., is chiefly compiled from the memoir of Nestesuranoi, but it contains, in addition, many original anecdotes and official documents.

† Lamberti.

anxious for the fortunes of her own son, that she never rested until she induced his majesty to commence proceedings against the czarovitch: that the czar, after giving him the knout with his own hand, cut off his head, which was afterwards so artfully joined to the body that the separation could not be detected: that in a short time the czarina's son died, and the czar, full of remorse for what he had done, became extremely ill-tempered; when, hearing that the czarina was engaged in a secret and criminal intercourse with prince Menzikoff, and being otherwise discontented with her on account of the deed she had induced him to commit, he resolved to strip her of the imperial honours, and shut her up in a convent: that this intention was noted down by the czar in his pocket-book, in which he kept a kind of diary of his private thoughts; that one of the pages of his majesty's bed-chamber brought the pocket-book to the czarina, who, upon reading the memorandum, sent in haste for the prince Menzikoff, and communicated it to him; that in a day or two afterwards the czar was seized with a violent distemper, and died; and that his death was universally attributed to poison. This story, ridiculous as it is, has obtained credit in many well-informed quarters, and has been further sustained by the opinion of a modern traveller of high character and attainments.* This gentleman derives his information in the first instance from an historical magazine, in which he found it affirmed that the prince Alexis was beheaded by the order of his father, and that marshal Weyde performed the office of executioner; which latter assertion relieves the czar from the charge of having executed that office himself. The ground upon which this strange assertion rests, is a conversation which is said to have taken place between a second person and a certain lady of the court of St. Petersburgh, who was so high in the confidence of Peter and Catherine, that she was said to have been employed in sewing the prince's head to his body before it lay in state. This tale, it

* The Rev. W. Cox — Travels in Poland, Russia, &c.

appears, was confirmed to the traveller by the report of an intimate acquaintance of the lady's, who assured him that he always found her extremely unwilling to speak of the death of Alexis; that she was exceedingly shocked whenever the topic was introduced; and that nothing further could be extorted from her, but that she was the person who prepared the body for lying in state. Authorities of this kind are of no value: they want exactitude, connection, and coherence; and although we find that several German historians have adopted implicitly the story of the beheading, and that the fact is also inserted in several of the genealogical tables of the imperial family, yet it derives no additional weight from those circumstances. An error does not become converted into truth by the number, or even the respectability, of its believers. As to the part which the czarina took in this mysterious affair, scarcely any reasonable doubt can be entertained. The accusation which has been brought against her of desiring to compass, for a sinister object, the death of her step-son, appears to be wholly unfounded. In the memoirs of a public minister* of the time, the following passage appears, relative to her conduct on that occasion:—"I was present when the czar told the duke of Holstein that the czarina Catherine had begged of him to prevent the sentence passed upon the czarvoitch being publicly read to that prince. 'Content yourself,' said she, 'with obliging him to turn monk; for this public and formal condemnation of your son will reflect odium on your grandson.'" The czar was deaf to this intercession, and insisted that the sentence should be publicly read to the prince, in order to give to the trial and its results their full legal solemnity. But while the character of the czarina is cleared from all imputation, there exists unfortunately but too much reason to believe that Peter was not equally exempt from criminality.

Amongst the persons who have given to the world their testimonies relative to this memorable affair, one

* Referred to by Voltaire.

of the most trustworthy and impartial is Mr. Bruce, an officer who was constantly about the person of the czar, who was afterwards aid-de-camp to general Weyde, who accompanied the czar on his expedition to the Caspian, and who was subsequently instructor to the son of the unfortunate Alexis. A near relative of this gentleman was a favourite general in the Russian service, and captain Bruce himself stood high in the esteem and confidence of the sovereign, to whom he was attached not only by gratitude for favours conferred upon him, but by his admiration of the character of that extraordinary man: any assertions, therefore, discreditable to the czar, which were made by captain Bruce, must be received as confessions due to truth, and put forward by him with reluctance. During his experience as a military man in Russia and other countries, he collected such information as happened to come within the reach of his inquiries; and the results of his observation were subsequently published.* The situation he filled at court afforded him the best opportunities of judging for himself of those scenes which have since been made the subject of various speculations and calumnies; and his narrative is written with so much simplicity and candour, and is so free from those traces of artifice and policy which usually disfigure the memoirs of persons about courts, that it commands a degree of attention to which it might not otherwise be considered entitled. In that part of the work which relates to his residence in Russia, he gives an accurate account of the trial of prince Alexis, concluding with the following extraordinary narrative, which is of too much importance not to be preserved in full:—

"The trial was begun the 25th of June (the particulars of which have been so fully related by others, that I thought a repetition of it needless), and continued

* "Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce, Esq., a Military Officer in the Service of Prussia, Russia, and Great Britain; containing an Account of his Travels, &c.; as also several very interesting private Anecdotes of the Czar Peter the First of Russia." This journal was originally written in German, and on Captain Bruce's retirement from the service in 1755, he translated it into English. In 1782, it was published for the benefit of his widow.

to the 6th of July, when the supreme court, with unanimous consent, passed sentence of death upon the prince, but left the manner of it to his majesty's determination. The prince was brought before the court, his sentence was read to him, and he was reconveyed to his prison in the fortress.

"On the next day his majesty, attended by all the senators and bishops, with several others of high rank, went to the fort, and entered the apartment where the czarovitch was kept prisoner. Some little time thereafter, marshal Weyde came out and ordered me to go to Mr. Bear, the druggist, whose shop was hard by, and tell him to make the POTION STRONG, which he had bespoke, as the prince was then very ill. *When I delivered this message to Mr. Bear, he turned quite pale, and fell a shaking and trembling, and appeared in the utmost confusion, which surprised me so much, that I asked him what was the matter with him; but he was unable to return me any answer. In the meantime the marshal himself came in, much in the same condition with the druggist, saying, he ought to have been more expeditious, as the prince was very ill of an apoplectic fit. Upon this, the druggist delivered him a silver cup with a cover, which the marshal himself carried into the prince's apartments, staggering all the way as he went, like one drunk.* About half an hour after, the czar, with all his attendants, withdrew, with very dismal countenances; and when they went, the marshal ordered me to attend at the prince's apartments, and in case of any alteration to inform him immediately thereof. There were at that time two physicians and two surgeons in waiting, with whom, and the officers on guard, I dined on what had been dressed for the prince's dinner. The physicians were called in immediately after to attend the prince, who was struggling out of one convulsion into another, and, after great agonies, expired at five o'clock in the afternoon. I went directly to inform the marshal, and he went that moment to acquaint his majesty, who ordered the corpse to be embowelled;

after which it was laid in a coffin covered with black velvet, and a pall of rich gold tissue spread over it: it was then carried out of the fort to the church of the Holy Trinity, where the corpse lay in state till the 11th, in the evening, when it was carried back to the fort, and deposited in the royal burying vault, next the coffin of the princess, his late consort: on which occasion the czar and czarina, and the chief of the nobility, followed in procession. Various were the reports that were spread concerning his death. It was given out publicly, that on hearing his sentence of death pronounced, the dread thereof threw him into an apoplectic fit, of which he died. *Very few believed he died a natural death; but it was dangerous for people to speak as they thought.* The ministers of the emperor, and the states of Holland, were forbid the court, for speaking their mind too freely on this occasion, and, upon complaint against them, were both recalled."

If this extraordinary statement had proceeded from an enemy of the czar, it would, unquestionably, be liable to great doubt, and might with propriety be rejected altogether from the page of history. But we frequently find, in our researches into the motives and actions of the great, that private individuals who have been drawn by accident into situations that enabled them to become spectators of public events, without giving them a personal interest in the exaggeration or concealment of facts, are frequently enabled to throw incidental lights upon particular occurrences for which we look in vain to more responsible authorities. Captain Bruce was an eyewitness of the almost incredible tragedy which he describes: had he been actuated by any less worthy object than the establishment of truth, he would undoubtedly have taken the other side of the question, where his feelings and his fortunes were immediately concerned, and endeavoured to have exculpated the czar, rather than to have become himself his accuser. The whole tenour of captain Bruce's narrative, which is written with so much sincerity as to exhibit satisfactory

internal evidence of its veracity, is strongly in favour of the magnanimity, the patriotism, and the stern justice of his royal master; and, even after relating this story, he seeks, not to excuse the criminality of the czar, upon which, indeed, he does not venture to make any commentary, but to trace in the monarch's ardent love of his country an absorbing apology for all those acts which were likely, in the estimate of posterity, to stain the character of the man. But the testimony of this officer, which we deem to be conclusive in itself, is not uncorroborated. Leclerc, a French historian, who was in St. Petersburg at the time, and a witness of these events, adopts the whole of Bruce's narrative in his history; thus giving his assent to its correctness.*

The *fact* whether Alexis died a natural death produced by terror, or whether he died by poison administered by the hand of his father, must remain a disputed question until further evidence shall clear up the doubts that at present rest upon it. The business of history is not strictly to decide such questions, but to place them in all their bearings fearlessly before the world. That Peter was a man of violent and ungovernable passions; that his hatred was deep and lasting; that he never hesitated to inflict the most cruel punishments upon those who offended him; and that he was at all times prepared to sacrifice private and personal feelings to the great objects that occupied his busy life,—are traits of character that afford a colouring of likelihood to a statement which imputes to him a crime that could not have taken place under more civilised institutions. It may be argued, it is true, that Peter had no need

* Leclerc's authority is not always to be relied upon. He too frequently betrays a restlessness in getting through details, which often committed him to those sources of information that happened to be nearest at hand, and were easiest of access. He was deficient in the patience and industry which are requisite for historical research. But these observations will not apply with equal force to those parts of his work which relate to events approaching his own time; and he may be safely admitted as a witness on the occasion above referred to, where casual opportunities brought the facts immediately before him. Voltaire, in his Life of the czar, does not make any allusion whatever to the story of the poisoning. Segur, who was an enthusiastic encomiast of Peter the Great, places implicit faith in the narrative of Bruce.

to take away, with his own hand, a life which was already forfeited to the laws; and that it was highly improbable that he should have become the murderer of his own son, when a few hours more would have transferred the delinquent to the hands of the legal executioner. But there are some circumstances which enter into the consideration of the case that deprive this argument of much of its force. It ought not to be lost sight of, that although the judicial assembly pronounced sentence of death upon the prince, they did not specify the manner of his death; and that they submitted the sentence to the "merciful revisal" of his majesty. There can be no doubt that it was generally expected that the czar would take advantage of that recommendation, and of the high discretion which the law vested in him, and commute the punishment to banishment for life in a monastery. The word of the czar had been formerly pledged to deal no heavier infliction upon the prince: the verdict of the judges had certainly released his majesty from that promise, by holding the prince responsible for his offences before a tribunal distinct from, but not superior to the sovereign authority; but the czar still possessed, not merely the royal perogative of mercy that is common to all nations, but the peculiar privilege of decision, paramount to the law itself, which the constitutions of the empire conferred upon him, and he might have given way to the suggestions of nature, without compromising the demands of justice. It was anticipated that he would avail himself of the lenient side of the alternative: how, then, could he escape from the odium of rejecting it, except by forestalling the office of the executioner? We are not borne out by the acts of Peter's life in assuming that he placed much value on the opinions of those by whom he was surrounded; but we know that the empress exercised a powerful influence over his mind, and we have at least one authority for the fact that she interceded with him on behalf of his son. When his ministers and favourites failed to assuage his unruly temper, or to change

his determinations, Catherine alone succeeded. Might not Peter, therefore, to avoid the ungraciousness and the self-reproaches of refusing to gratify his consort on so reasonable a point, have devised this dreadful method of placing his son beyond the reach of his mercy? Assassinations on the throne, and close to the throne, were common in Russia; nor had the sway of Peter, mighty as were the reforms which he introduced, so completely subdued the barbarism of the empire as to deter him, if it suited his purpose, from imitating the dark examples of his predecessors. But might he not have been actuated by another, and perhaps a stronger, motive, springing from the glory of his name and the pride of his descent? The alliances which he had formed with the principal nations of Europe; the dazzling reputation he had achieved, abroad and at home, by his victories and his domestic policy; and the proud sense of inheritance by blood of a throne which trembled to its foundations when he ascended it, but which he had rendered secure by his heroism and his wisdom; might have led him to regard with horror the degrading death which awaited the first-born of his house. Such motives have governed the actions of men who had less excuse for tyranny, and whose natures were less arbitrary and vindictive. Whether these speculations be just or not, one fact, at all events, is indisputable: that an officer who was about the person of the czar, and who was himself a participator in the scene he describes, published to the world, many years ago, a statement which cast upon the czar the imputation of a monstrous crime, and that that statement has never since been contradicted or disproved.

But, without pursuing any further the train of reflections to which the consideration of this subject unavoidably leads, it cannot be disguised that the conduct of Peter to his unfortunate son, from the moment he returned to Moscow, was marked by a succession of perfidies. Alexis was tempted to return upon the faith of a voluntary promise that his offences should be par-

doned; and the worst punishment which the previous threats of the czar had led him to expect was seclusion for life in a monastery. Even if he had doubted the extension of the proffered mercy, not a single circumstance had occured, not a single word had been written or spoken that could have suggested to him the fear of a weightier sentence. Whatever his offences were, it was under the sanction of the czar's pledge that he placed himself once more at his disposal. He relinquished his right of succession to the throne; assented solemnly to the choice of another heir; was willing to take the cowl; and in all things yielded himself up unreservedly to the will of his father. But what course did Peter adopt towards this humbled and spirit-broken prince? Did he cultivate the repentant disposition he exhibited? Did he receive his remorse with paternal or royal forgiveness? Was he satisfied with setting aside his birthright, and rendering him dead in law by banishing him to the forlorn cells of a religious retreat?—No. He apprehended that although such a measure would certainly cancel his claims during his own lifetime, it would not effectually bar him from the succession after his death. He regarded the party with which Alexis had, by a combination of circumstances, been mixed up, as the inveterate enemies of improvement; and he was resolved to destroy it at its roots, whatever might be the sacrifies he should be called upon to make. In the pursuit of this desolating policy, which was undoubtedly wise in so far as the interests of Russia were concerned, he determined to annihilate in the person of the czarovitch the lingering hopes of the conspirators against a growing empire. But the course he adopted was disgraceful in the sovereign, and revolting in the father. He was aware that, as he had solemnly guaranteed the life of the prince upon a stipulated condition that he should return to the capital, and that, as the prince had fulfilled his part of the undertaking, he could not bring him to public trial, nor deprive him of the benefit of the imperial mercy,

unless some new ground of criminality should be established, which would afford a feasable pretext for extreme proceedings. The details of the inquisition that was instituted in Moscow and St. Petersburg, attest the vigilance and changeless determination with which this malignant design was carried into effect. The friends of the prince were suborned against him; his mistress was bribed and pensioned for betraying him; and the secrets of the confessional were, by a violation of the most sacred privilege of religion, turned into accusations. Nor was this all: the private thoughts of the offender were extorted from him, and, for the first time in the annals of nations, the undivulged speculations of a persecuted man were converted into capital crimes. The agents employed to work upon his inexperience and his fears were the most crafty and unscrupulous men of the time; and when they failed to draw from the prisoner sufficient testimony upon which he could be condemned, they wrung from him, by menaces and promises, a variety of statements, in which they compelled him to inculpate himself. Not satisfied with obtaining from him a plenary acknowledgment of that which was true, they did not abandon the torture until they forced him to acknowledge that which must have been false. Such was the nature of the investigation to which Alexis was subjected. A man naturally of weak intellect, it was impossible that he could escape from the fate that had been already prepared for him. The avidity with which his credulous submission was taken advantage of; the mockery of a judicial trial; the parade of an ecclesiastical sanction, where none was required; the formality of justifying the circumstances to the crowned heads of Eruope, which would have been unnecessary, if they were open, and free from suspicion; and the mysterious manner of the prince's death, are facts which must for ever darken the memory of Peter the Great. The only apology that has been attempted to be made for his conduct in this unworthy transaction consists in the line of distinction

which he is presumed to have drawn between his duties as a sovereign and his feelings as a parent. But that apology will not avail to rescue him from the odium of this affair. Had the guilt of the Prince been clearly exhibited in the first instance; had the czar not embarrassed the rigid course of justice, by a promise of mercy that was of no other value than to allure the prince into his power; and had he surrendered up the culprit to be tried fairly by the laws of the country, instead of dragging from him before-hand the very proofs of guilt upon which the trial was to proceed, posterity would have sympathised with the sufferings of the father, while it regarded with wonder and admiration the lofty virtue of the sovereign. But that was not the case: the prosecution of the prince was strained and compulsory; nor did Peter, throughout the whole, betray a solitary token of a mental struggle between the conflicting difficulties of his position. On the contrary, the inflexible judge was always visible — the father, never. At what conclusion, then, can history arrive, but that the glory of the hero and the legislator was on this occasion sacrificed to his bad passions?

CHAP. VII.

DOMESTIC REFORMS. — CONSPIRACY OF GOERTZ AND ALBERONI TO CREATE AN EUROPEAN REVOLUTION. — DEATH OF CHARLES XII. — HOSTILITIES WITH SWEDEN. — TERMINATION OF THE WAR, AND PEACE OF NEUSTADT. — CELEBRATION OF THE PEACE. — INQUIRY INTO ABUSES AT MOSCOW. — SETTLEMENT OF THE SUCCESSION. — INVASION OF PERSIA. — SURRENDER OF DERBENT. — TREATY BETWEEN THE EMPEROR, THE SULTAN, AND THE SHAH. — CORONATION OF CATHARINE. — MANIFESTO OF THE EMPEROR. — DEATH OF PETER.

The sad task which Peter had imposed upon himself in this year (1718), of arraigning his son for misdemeanours against himself and the empire, did not prevent him from prosecuting, with unremitting vigilance, those extensive reforms of a domestic kind, to which his attention had recently been directed in his visit to Holland, France, and Prussia. It was in this year that he appointed an universal police, under the control of the lieutenant-general, whose bureau was in St. Petersburg. He also established a board of trade, one half the members of which were natives, and the other half foreigners; and he opened new branches of trade, which now began to flourish with unexampled rapidity. Canals were also constructed, by which distant seas, rivers, and tribes were joined, which had been hitherto separated. Gaming-houses and extravagance in dress were prohibited under severe penalties; mendicity was suppressed; almshouses and hospitals were endowed and filled; weights and measures were fixed on an uniform plan; great improvements were effected in the large towns, and St. Petersburgh was well lighted with lamps, a convenience that was introduced into Paris by Louis XIV.; the

iron and steel manufactories, the corn, powder, and sawing mills, were greatly extended, and rendered more valuable by the accession of numerous artizans from France; the manufacture of woollen stuffs was encouraged by bounties; silks, as fine as those of Ispahan, were spun upon the inclement banks of Lake Ladoga; from whence he commenced, by a canal and sluices, a communication with the Neva, and another navigable river, for the more expeditious transfer of merchandise to St. Petersburg; the city of Ladoga was built, and a body of engineers were commissioned to make a tour of the empire, that the czar might lay before the world the chart of his vast dominions.

Amidst these numerous labours, and during the term of his son's imprisonment and trial, Peter found other objects, of still higher moment, to which it was necessary he should give vigilant attention. The war with Sweden was not yet concluded, but was still carried on faintly, in the hope of an expected peace. The European revolution, with which Peter had made himself acquainted during his residence at the Hague, was now apparently about to break out into open action. In the preceding year (1717), cardinal Albéroni, prime minister of Philip V. of Spain, had concerted with the intriguing Goertz a project for effecting a complete change in the affairs of Europe. The main features of this ambitious design were, to establish a reconciliation between the czar and Charles XII.; to drive George I. from the throne of England; to replace Stanislaus in Poland; and to transfer the regency of France to Philip of Spain. This extensive plot could not, of course, be carried into effect without the consent and assistance of some of the powers whom it concerned. Charles XII. may be supposed to have readily acquiesced in a plan that was eminently recommended by its wildness and impracticability; but Peter, more wary and cautious, listened to the proposals of Goertz, and, before he delivered an opinion, reserved to himself the right of examining them private. In the mean time, how ever, Goertz prevailed

upon the czar to send plenipotentiaries to the island of Aland, for the purpose of setting on foot a treaty of peace: Bruce and Ostermann attended on the part of Russia, and Goertz and Gillembourg on the part of Sweden.

It was not a little remarkable, that, during the sitting of this congress, hostilities were still continued by Peter, whose fleets were then cruising off the coast of Sweden, with a view of forcing the Swedes into a peace, of which he was aware they stood in much need. But, notwithstanding this appearance of war, it was evident that both countries were now rapidly approaching to a peace. The proceedings of the congress were marked by mutual expressions of good will: the czar restored marshal Erenschild to liberty; and Charles, in return, liberated Trubet Skir and Gallowin, who had been prisoners ever since the battle of Narva. The good understanding that now subsisted between both parties promised, at last, to draw them into that offensive alliance which it was the desire of Goertz to bring about. His project, if it had been effected, would have convulsed all the dynasties of Europe, and deposed the king of England. Aware that Peter was offended because Wismar, which of right belonged to the duke of Mecklenburg, his nephew by marriage, had been partitioned to the king of Denmark, Goertz proposed to put the duchy of Mecklenburg into his hands. The reigning duke was then at variance with the nobility, whose cause was espoused by the king of England as elector of Hanover; and the crafty diplomatist saw in this arrangement a means not only of mortifying the king of England, but of greatly augmenting the power of Peter in Germany, and thus giving him a direct interest in the prosecution of the general scheme. The duke of Mecklenburg was to have been compensated by the duchy of Courland, and a part of Prussia; while Bremen and Verden were to revert to Sweden. The remainder of the plot was so dazzling, that it might be referred, perhaps, with greater propriety to the visionary Charles than to his subtle minister. Charles was

then engaged in Norway, and it was arranged that, when he had subdued that country, he should make a descent upon Great Britain, and put a new monarch upon the throne of that kingdom, as he had already done in Poland. The result of this extraordinary enterprise was expected to involve the downfall of the regent of France, the ally of England, who would not then be in a condition to resist the formidable legions of Spain.

Such was the extravagant conspiracy organised by Alberoni and Goertz; and, just as they thought themselves secure, their magnificent hopes were crushed by an accidental shot before the walls of Fredericstadt, in Norway, which killed Charles XII. Accumulated misfortunes now fell upon the conspirators. A Spanish fleet was beaten by that of England; the intrigues of Alberoni were detected, and he was expelled from Spain; Goertz was beheaded at Stockholm; and the czar alone, of all those to whom the plot was made known, retained an unblemished name, by not having committed himself throughout the whole negotiations. It is said that, when he heard of the death of Charles, he burst into tears, and exclaimed, "My dear Charles, how much I lament you!" This event had the immediate effect of setting aside the contemplated relations between Russia and Sweden, and of placing the former country in an altered position. Ulrica, the sister of Charles, was elected queen in his place, upon the express stipulation of renouncing those arbitrary principles which distinguished the reign of her brother; and Sweden, instead of forming an alliance with Russia, became the ally of her enemies. The first open demonstration of hostilities took place in Mecklenburg, which was entered by a body of Hanoverian troops, who were speedily driven out by the force which the czar kept up in that duchy. Peter's dispositions of his army were well laid: he kept some troops in Poland, to check both Augustus and Stanislaus, while he had a fleet at sea, in which he served as second in command, to watch the coast of Sweden. In an engagement that followed with a Swedish squadron, he took one ship of

the line, two frigates, and drove the enemy into port. At this juncture, an English fleet appeared in the Baltic; when Peter sent a message to the admiral, to demand whether he came as the friend of Sweden, or the enemy of Russia. The reply of the admiral was, that he had not received any orders to act in either capacity; and shortly after he made sail for Copenhagen. The Russians, exasperated, probably, by this evasive and armed neutrality, resolved to avenge themselves upon the Swedes; and, descending upon the coast, they destroyed, according to one account, hundreds of villages, hamlets, and castles, and all the copper and iron works, and other manufactories, that fell within their range; broke down the mounds that sheltered the mines against inundation, and spread ruin and desolation wherever they appeared. These devastations induced the Swedes to desire a suspension of arms; but the year passed over before any definitive treaty was concluded. In 1720, however, the prince of Hesse, who had become king of Sweden by virtue of his marriage with the queen, finding that the appearance of the English in those seas had failed to intimidate the czar, engaged the interference of the duke of Orleans, regent of France, who happily succeeded in drawing the protracted war to a favourable termination. A congress was held at Neustadt, in Finland; but Peter, being then in possession of Finland, refused to agree to any terms except those which he should himself dictate. The plenipotentiaries were not in a condition to dispute the points for which he contended; and they therefore agreed, at last, to accept the conditions for which he stipulated. By this treaty Peter retained possession of all the provinces he had conquered from Courland to the extremity of the gulph of Iceland, and from thence through Kexholm and a narrow slip of Finland; leaving him undisputed master of Livonia, Esthonia, Ingria, Carelia, Wybourg, and the neighbouring isles; the whole occupying a line of 3000 leagues in length, of unequal breadth, and of magnitude sufficient. The congress at which this treaty was agreed to was held in

February, 1721; and in the following September it was signed by the Russian minister Ostermann, and General Bruce.

The effect of this treaty upon Russia, after twenty years of unbroken fatigues, was immediate and universal. Peter, relieved from the necessity of maintaining an expensive force on the borders of Sweden, and at peace with those nations from which he had the greatest reason to apprehend hostilities, had now the more leisure to look around him at home, and proceed with those works of domestic improvement, which, even amidst the occupations of war, he had cultivated with restless solicitude. There lay before him some responsible acts, which required all the repose he could command to enable him to execute them in a spirit worthy of himself and the empire he had created. The death, two years previously, of his only remaining son, Peter Petrovitz, rendered it necessary that he should choose a successor to the throne; and much remained yet to be done towards the completion of those social reforms which he had found it so difficult to infuse amongst the people.

But, before any of these designs could have been commenced, it was necessary to celebrate a glorious peace, which secured to Russia the possession of a vast extent of territory which he had won by repeated conquests in fields of blood. The rejoicings on this occasion exceeded in splendour and popular enthusiasm any similar anniversary that had ever been witnessed by the population. It was universally felt that this peace was the proudest and most important of all the czar's achievements, and the expression of the public joy was intense in proportion. Peter, pleased with the delight that had spread itself through all ranks, availed himself of the opportunity to render the event still more memorable, by granting a free pardon and release to all prisoners, and by a general remission of the taxes due to the royal treasury. Nor did he omit to remind his subjects, of the original steps by which they had been led to so triumphant an issue. He exhibited to them the small sailing vessel

which had in his youth inspired him to commence the construction of a navy. This little boat he had preserved with the utmost care, and used to take the greatest interest in decorating it, and arming its miniature decks with silver cannon. The rejoicings lasted for fifteen days. The whole bearing of the czar, upon the occasion of this grand festival, was that of a conqueror returned home, covered with laurels, to the bosom of his family. It was not surprising that his grateful people should have seized upon this felicitous moment to confirm, by an illustrious title, the transcendent claims he possessed upon their devotion. The senate decreed to him the titles of great, emperor, and father of his country. He was addressed in the cathedral by the high chancellor, and the voices of the senators rent the air with acclamations of "Long live our emperor and father!" The foreign ministers then resident in St. Petersburg congratulated him upon his new and well-won honours; and the appellation of emperor was formally recognised by all the European courts except that of Poland, which was convulsed by factions, and that of the pope, which was too insignificant to render its favours or its silence of any consequence.

When the fêtes were concluded at St. Petersburg, the czar considered it proper to renew them for his inland subjects at Moscow; and, as these people had never seen the sea, he ordered a little yacht and a frigate of sixteen guns, manned by youths dressed like Dutch skippers, to be mounted on sledges and driven for several days through the streets, with colours flying, and a band of martial music. This exhibition not only pleased the inhabitants by its novelty, but served to give them a better idea of a naval armament than they possessed any means of forming before.* The triumphant entry of the emperor under decorated arches, where he was greeted by the authorities, — the masquerades, soirées,

* Travels in Russia, &c. By John Bell, of Antermony. Bell was attached in a medical capacity to an embassy sent by Peter into China, and also accompanied the emperor in his expedition to the shores of the Caspian. Bell's book is valuable for the honesty of his statements.

and entertainments that for six weeks engrossed the citizens, are described to have been of the most splendid description. Amongst the diversions which the emperor deemed it expedient to introduce to the populace of his ancient capital, was one of those burlesque carnivals which placed the clergy in a ridiculous point of view. Moscow was the head quarters of those families which still clung to the old manners, and of that section of the clergy who still regarded with abhorrence the church reforms of the emperor. Peter was aware that the unreflecting multitude were more accessible to broad strokes of ridicule than to the most acute arguments; and the method he adopted of exposing the superstitions and absurdities of the church was completely successful. But enough was not yet done to reduce the power of that arbitrary body, who still retained a strong hold upon the people by the influence they possessed through the monastic institutions. Russia was thinly populated; and one of the most serious drains was the church, which drew into its cloisters all those persons it could seduce from the world. It was obviously as much the interest of the church to encourage this system as it was that of the state to discourage it; for the monasteries and nunneries were supported at the public expense, for which they yielded nothing in return, while they inflicted upon the country the serious evil of checking the progress of population. The emperor, resolved to correct this great abuse, issued an ordinance to the effect, that no person of either sex should be admitted to a monastic life under the age of fifty; adding, that he should hold himself guilty of ingratitude to the Most High, if, after having reformed the civil and military departments, he should neglect the spiritual.

During his residence in Moscow, he appointed a commission, with marshal Weyde at its head, to inquire into certain abuses that had grown up in the administration of affairs in his absence. The most important matter which the commissioners were called upon to investigate was a charge against prince Gagarin, governor

of Siberia, who was accused of having robbed his majesty's caravan from China, and of murdering the persons by whom it was conducted; by which the prince had possessed himself of enormous wealth. The proofs that were submitted to examination placed the prince's guilt beyond doubt, and he was accordingly sent to prison to await the pleasure of his majesty. Peter visited him in person, and, remonstrating with him upon the folly of an obstinate refusal to acknowledge his offence, pledged his royal word, that, if he would make a full confession, he would pardon him. The prince submitted himself to the clemency of his sovereign, and gave in a document in writing, in which he admitted that the accusation was true: but when this paper was read before the senate, the unfortunate governor, irresolute and terrified, reasserted his innocence, and declared that the emperor had worked upon his fears, and compelled him to sign the statement against his will. This extraordinary assertion astonished the court: Peter, however, ordered the witnesses to be reproduced, and, with the governor's private secretary, who was first on the list, they established in the presence of the accused the validity of the charge. Gagarin, confounded in his own toils, fell upon his knees, and confessed that he was unworthy of mercy: Peter thought so too, and ordered him to be hanged on a gallows fifty cubits high, before the whole body of the senators, with many of whom he was personally connected.

It was now necessary to make preparations for the nomination of a suitable successor to the throne. Peter's anxiety for the happiness of Russia was not limited by the term of his own exertions, for he knew that upon his successor depended, even more than upon himself, the progress of civilisation. His labours, it is true, had laid the foundation of general prosperity, and a consolidated power; but, as had too frequently happened before, the wise measures of one generation might be utterly overthrown by the false ambition, the weakness, or the divisions of the next. It was essential that he

who had brought this gigantic work to its present state of comparative perfection, should himself choose the instrument to which its future care should be confided. He therefore, now that his son Peter Petrovitz was dead, resolved to settle the succession on a prince who would prosecute with vigour, and in the same enlarged spirit, those designs which he had commenced. To this end, he desired, in the first instance, to obtain the implicit allegiance of the people to the person, whoever it might be, whom he should select; and he accordingly ordered public notice to be given, requiring all the inhabitants of Moscow to repair on a certain day to the church, when printed papers should be delivered to them, signifying that it was his imperial majesty's pleasure that every man should swear that he would not only approve of the choice of a successor which his majesty should make, but acknowledge the person he should appoint as emperor and sovereign. A similar order was also published in St. Petersburg, and the grandees of the empire were commanded, on pain of death and confiscation, to attend at Moscow for the same purpose, with the exception of those residing at Astracan and Siberia, who, living at too great a distance, were allowed to subscribe the oath before their respective governors. The people, confiding wholly in the wisdom of the emperor, obeyed this order with universal satisfaction.* It was commonly believed that Peter intended to nominate prince Nariskin, a relative of his own, and one that possessed all the requisites necessary for government; but this conjecture was groundless.

* Bruce, who was appointed to administer the oath throughout one of the parishes, says that "the order struck a damp on the spirits of everybody, when they reflected on the undoubted title of the young prince Peter, his majesty's grandson, and only remaining male heir of the imperial family; who was as promising and hopeful a young prince as any of his age could possibly be." Bruce was the military tutor to this young prince, and naturally felt a deep concern in his welfare. That a remnant of the party who would have supported the claims of Alexis — not for any merit of his own, but in resistance to the policy of Peter — still existed, cannot be doubted. Possibly Bruce may have formed his judgment upon his experience amongst those partisans, or it may be that his own feelings suggested the conclusion at which he arrived; but the best authorities concur in stating that the Russians generally acquiesced, without an expression of dissent, in the wishes of their sovereign.

One of the most important changes effected at this period was the transfer of the greater part of the foreign trade of Russia, hitherto transacted at Archangel, to St. Petersburg and Riga. The trade with Persia, consisting chiefly of silk, was carried on at Astracan by Americans, who had been encouraged to settle there by Peter; but circumstances occurred at this juncture that drew his attention to that quarter, and rendered it necessary that he should adopt immediate steps for restoring his commerce in the east to its former freedom. Persia, ruled by Hussein, a weak and effeminate prince, who was then disputing his throne with Mahmoud, a rebel who had usurped it, was divided, like Turkey, into several provinces, each of which was differently governed; to some of which the court paid tribute under the name of subsidies. Two of those nations revolted against the anthority of the shah; the Afghans, commanded by Mahmoud, invading Persia on the one side, while the Lesgians inhabiting the branches of Mount Caucasus to the westward of the Caspian, poured in upon the other pillaged the province of Shirven, and, taking possession of the city of Shamachia, put the inhabitants to the sword, including about 300 Russians, who had been settled there in trade, and whose warehouses they plundered to the amount of 4,000,000 of rubles. Peter, irritated by this wanton proceeding, immediately demanded satisfaction of the shah, who expressed himself willing to make any reparation in his power; but Mahmoud, who at this time had penetrated the heart of Persia, refused to recognise the claims of the emperor. In this extremity, Peter resolved to obtain retribution by force, and made rapid preparations for invading the country. The shah no sooner heard of Peter's intention, than he sent a private message to him, to beg that he would undertake at the same time the defence of Persia against her domestic enemies.

A project for rendering himself master of the Caspian, by which he could turn the commerce of Persia and a part of India through his own dominions, had long

been contemplated by Peter. He was already well acquainted with that sea, having formerly sent expeditions to sound its waters, and survey its coasts.* He gladly, therefore, availed himself of this legitimate opportunity to carry his design into effect. He set sail for the coast of Persia on the 15th May, 1722, accompanied by Catherine. They navigated the Wolga as far as the city of Astracan, from whence he went to inspect the progress of the canals that were to connect the Caspian, the Baltic, and the Euxine. While he was thus engaged, the provisions for his expedition arrived in the Caspian. The force he proposed to take with him consisted of 22,000 foot, 9000 dragoons, 15,000 Cossacks, and 3000 seamen. The plan he laid down was full of perils. It was intended that the horses should proceed over land, through deserts, where water was seldom to be had, and afterwards to cross the Caucasus, in the almost impracticable defiles of which a handful of men were sufficient to check the progress of a whole army. But the distracted state of Persia was such, that the emperor did not pause at those difficulties which in times of peace would have been insuperable. While he was on the Wolga, he formed an alliance with the king of the Calmucs, who had pitched his tents on the eastern bank of that river. Peter intimated to this new ally, that he wished for 10,000 of his troops to accompany him into Persia; to which the other replied, that they were cheerfully at his service, but that a levy of 5000 would be less inconvenient. This latter arrangement was immediately

* The first expedition was for the avowed object of discovering the mouth of the river Daria, which now falls into the sea of Aral, but which then was said to have fallen into the Caspian, its current having been turned by the Usbecks. The expedition was ordered to go up towards the source of the river in search of certain gold mines, which were supposed to lie upon its banks. A quantity of gold was stated to have been found there, and, at some distance in the interior, a large stone building, partially buried in the sand, in which were contained presses of black wood, filled with nearly three thousand volumes of books written in the Calmuc or Mongul characters. The natives regarded both the building and the books as sacred, and it was with difficulty the Russians could obtain permission to take away three volumes as specimens. They also found in the burial places of the Calmucs several small brass statues, and Indian and Chinese idols. It is supposed, by this description, that the site of these discoveries must have been the ruins of Omgantz, situated on an ancient branch of the Oxus.

adopted, and the Calmuc troops joined the emperor on the shores of the Caspian. On the 28th of July, the expedition landed at the mouth of the river Agrechan. On their march to Sulak, the intolerable heats greatly affected the army; and in consequence of the avidity with which the horses devoured a poisonous herb called Roman wormwood, great numbers of them died.* His majesty was here joined by the Daghistan Tartars, who, however, taking umbrage at the execution of the chief of Andreof, by order of the emperor, determined to take revenge on the Russians. This disposition was no sooner manifested, than the emperor, riding along the guards, inquired if their muskets were loaded, and on discovering they were not, ordered the swords of the officers to be taken from them, and to be replaced by four heavy muskets; while the field officers, as well as the rest, were compelled to march on foot. This severe punishment, which was rendered almost intolerable by the extreme sultriness of the climate, continued for two hours, when the empress pleaded so effectually in their favour, that they were released from their burdens, and had their swords restored to them.† Throughout this campaign, Peter exhibited the same devotion that had marked the most active and brilliant periods of his life. He never spared personal fatigue, but sometimes riding and sometimes walking, he was always found partaking of the toils of his army. His usual dress was a short dimity waistcoat, and a white nightcap, with a plain flapped hat over it: but when he received a deputation, he wore his regimentals, as colonel of the guards.

In the middle of September, the army reached the city of Derbent, the upper part of which joins a branch of Mount Caucasus, the lower part lying open to the sea. From the position of the city it would appear to be impregnable on the land side, and exposed to danger only from the water; yet the governor who had long sustained a siege against Mahmoud, voluntarily came forward to meet the emperor, laid the keys of the city

* Bell. † Bruce.

at his feet, and invited him to enter with his troops. Mahmoud made an attempt to prevent the occupation of the city by Peter, calling upon the neighbouring Tartars to assist him when it was too late: Peter had already taken peaceable possession of the place, and was encamped within the walls, on the sea shore. While he remained here, several offers of tribute were made to him if he would march with his army against the usurper; but at this crisis news arrived that thirteen provision ships from Astracan, intended for the use of the army, had been cast away to the southward of Derbent. This unpropitious accident determined Peter to abandon an expedition which had been rather rashly undertaken; and in the following January he returned to Moscow. Thus ended a campaign in which the flower of the Russian army was most unprofitably exposed to great privations and hardships.

The divisions in Persia continued to rage with unabated fury: Hussein soliciting assistance from the emperor, and Mahmoud endeavouring to excite the Ottoman Porte to hostilities against Peter, in consequence of the devastations he committed in Daghistan. The divan, alarmed for the safety of Georgia, which it included within its dominions, was about to declare war against Peter; but the intervention of the courts of Vienna and Paris had the effect of dissuading it from its purpose. The situation of the shah, however, who was a wanderer in his own kingdom, and who supplicated both Russia and Turkey for help, offering to surrender to them one part of his possessions if they would enable him to hold the remainder, rendered some movement on his behalf unavoidable. A treaty was accordingly entered into between the emperor Peter, the sultan, Achmet III., and the shah, by which it was arranged, that Russia should hold possession of the provinces of Cuhan, Mazanderan, and Asterabath; and that the Porte should have Casbin, Taurus, and Erivan, besides those places which he had already seized from the usurper. Thus Persia regained her freedom and

her monarch by a voluntary dismemberment. Such was the good fortune that attended Peter, that it almost seemed as if he obtained advantages even from calamity. The invasion of Persia was ill-judged; and its immediate results were disastrous; yet it finally led to a new division of territories, by which Peter might be said to have extended his empire from the extremity of the Baltic Sea to the southern limits of the Caspian.

The period of repose, after a life dedicated with sleepless vigilance to the good of his country, was now arrived; and Peter, as if he were conscious that he had extended his conquests to the last point to which it would have been prudent to penetrate, appeared well disposed to avail himself of that glorious ease, which, unlike the ease of other men, was always occupied with projects for advancing the prosperity of his subjects. It was a period of profound peace. His remote territories were securely protected, and trade and manufactures flourished all over the face of the interior. Under circumstances so propitious, which were calculated to shed increased lustre upon the act, he determined that she who had so long shared his dangers and his cares, should now participate equally with himself in their reward. This object, so honourable to the character of Peter, was announced with unusual pomp: and the coronation of the empress Catharine took place on the 28th of May, 1724, in the presence of the duchess of Courland, niece to the emperor, and the duke of Holstein, nephew of Charles XII., his intended son-in-law. In order to testify to the world the gratitude he felt to the empress for the various services she had rendered to Russia and to himself, he walked on foot before her on this occasion as captain of a new company, which he had created under the name of the Knights of the Empress; and, when they arrived at the cathedral, he placed the crown upon her head with his own hands. The empress was so much affected, that she sunk at his feet, which she attempted to embrace; but Peter re-assured her confidence, and the procession

returned as it came, the globe and sceptre being, by his especial order, carried before her. All the accounts that are given by contemporary writers of this august ceremony, represent it to have been splendid and costly in the last degree. The prince Menzikoff followed in the train of the empress, habited in the most magnificent attire, and supported by two officers of state, carrying rich purses filled with gold and silver medals. A retrospective glance upon the few years that had elapsed since Martha, the soldier's widow, and captive of Marienburgh, had occupied a place in the household of Menzikoff, and since Menzikoff himself had filled the meanest office in the kitchen of the palace, must have rendered that gorgeous spectacle, to at least two of the persons who participated in it, almost too dazzling for belief. Nor could a transition of fortune so steady in its course, so marvellous in its conclusion, and so permanent in its results, have occurred in any country in the world except in one where the people themselves were undergoing a transition quite as strange and wonderful. The immunities that sprang from custom, or that were held by force, had ceased to be available in their exercise, or useful as passports to power. The order of things was changed. Merit, wherever it was found, was cherished and ennobled; and this new system of rewards had so completely entered into the business of life, that the people expressed no surprise at seeing the throne itself shared by one who had been raised to that elevation by the patience, the sagacity, and the dignity of her character.

Upon this occasion, the emperor, according to his usual custom, issued a public manifesto, in which he stated the reasons which led him to confer this extraordinary honour upon his consort. The manifesto commenced by citing several instances to show, that the custom of crowning their spouses was common among many Christian monarchs as well as heathen emperors, in ages past. The emperor then observes, that it was well known how much he had exposed his own person,

and been placed in the midst of the most imminent perils for the sake of his dear country, in the course of a twenty years' war, which had now been brought to a most advantageous and glorious termination. The manifesto then proceeded in these words: — "The empress Catharine, our dearest consort, was an important help to us in all these dangers, not in war alone, but in other expeditions, in which she voluntarily accompanied us, serving us with her able council, notwithstanding the natural weakness of her sex; more particularly at the battle of the Pruth, where our army was reduced to 22,000 men, while the Turks were 220,000 strong. It was in this desperate circumstance that she signalized her zeal by a courage superior to her sex, as is well known to the whole army throughout the empire. For these reasons, and in virtue of that power which God has given us, we are resolved to honour our spouse with the imperial crown, in acknowledgment for all her services and fatigues." This manifesto, although it does not contain any allusion to a successor, and the manner in which the coronation was conducted, were obviously calculated to impress upon the minds of the people, that it was the emperor's desire that Catharine should inherit the throne after his death. The promptitude with which he required that his subjects should take the oath of allegiance to whomsoever he should appoint to the succession, and the fact that he had up to this time not determined upon his choice, further strengthen the belief that he wished the crown to descend with her upon whose head he had placed it. It was clear, however, that Catharine was crowned only as the wife of the reigning sovereign, and that the authority which that ceremony bestowed upon her must cease with the life of her husband; a fact, which in itself, abundantly refutes the idle calumnies of the day, which accused her of being the author of the emperor's death, since it plainly proves that she was directly interested in the preservation of his life.

The coronation was no sooner concluded than the

princess Anna Petrowna was given away in marriage to the duke of Holstein, to cement which alliance the the more closely, Peter had previously entered into a treaty with the crown of Sweden.

The emperor and the court now repaired to St. Petersburgh. The health of the emperor had of late been rapidly giving way: he had suffered severely from a stranguary, which he had concealed from his medical attendants, until, in the summer of 1724, it became so insupportable that he was compelled to submit to the advice of his physicians. The danger was discovered to be extreme, and the emperor kept his room for four months, when, finding the pain abated and his strength increased, he signified his intention of visiting the works on Lake Ladoga. His attendants remonstrated against the imprudence of this step; but Peter was resolved. The voyage occupied from the beginning of October to the 5th of November, during which time Peter betrayed symptoms of the return of the complaint. But his energetic spirit did not quail under these depressing circumstances; and, on one occasion, he recklessly waded up to his knees in the water, to assist in the rescue of a boat that had run aground upon the rocks.* This unfortunate act of generosity, so characteristic of his nature, hastened the catastrophe which human skill could not have much longer averted. He was seized with fever at night, and immediately conveyed to St. Petersburgh. His malady now made rapid progress, and burning pains penetrated his frame, and threw him into a constant delirium.† In the intervals of reason he made many attempts to write, but the few characters he traced, were almost wholly unintelligible: the only words

* This account is given by Stœhlin, whose opportunities of obtaining information at the court of St Petersburgh were highly favourable, and who invariably cites the authorities upon which his statements are founded.

† MSS of Count de Bassewitz, quoted by Voltaire Count de Bassewitz was minister to the duke of Holstein, who had been recently married to the emperor's daughter. His accounts, therefore, must be received with caution; and if, in this particular instance, he meant to insinuate that Peter, by calling the princess to his bed side (for it is upon his authority the fact is stated), intended to nominate her as his successor, it is hardly necessary to observe that he wrote in the spirit of a partisan, and not with the candour of one whose object it was to subserve the interests of truth.

that could be deciphered were a few written in the Russian language. *Let every thing be given to* ——. He sent for the princess Anna Petrowna for the purpose of dictating to her; but when she arrived he was speechless, having fallen into a fit, which continued for sixteen hours. The empress Catharine, faithful to the last, watched by his bedside for three successive nights, and at four o'clock on the morning of the 28th of January, 1725, he expired in her arms.

The funeral of the emperor was conducted upon a scale of magnitude worthy of his great achievements, and the honours paid to his memory were not confined to the vulgar testimonials that ordinarily mark the death of sovereigns, but were exhibited in the universal grief of an afflicted people, who had lost in him their father, and the founder of their rights.

The character of Peter the great is best developed in the record of his acts. His life was a life of action, and the impediments against which he had to struggle, from the commencement to the close of his career, afford a partial, if not a sufficing apology for his faults, while they greatly elevate his numerous and unequalled merits. He never considered himself, or the perils by which he was surrounded, while he was labouring for the benefit of his country. Oppressed by faction in his youth, he might be considered to have been almost a self-educated man; and in everything that concerned the responsibilities of the sovereign and the duties of the commander, he owed nothing to the examples of those around him, but was indebted for all his greatness to himself. He found the empire convulsed by disorders, the prey of petty and privileged tyrannies, weak by disunion, and trembling on its frontiers before nations more advanced in civilisation, and more powerful than itself: he left it an ally and an equal of the states of Europe, augmented in territory, with a flourishing trade, and outlets upon the seas, for the cultivation and enlargement of its commerce; freed from its ancient and barbarous usages, improved in social civilisation and

knowledge of the arts of life; with a well-disciplined and experienced army, a considerable naval force, and countless institutions for the culture of the mental and military sciences, fine arts, and literature, for the dispensations of charity and the protection of popular rights; and he bequeathed to mankind a wondrous moral of the power of a single mind, to raise an obscure and divided country, in an incredibly short space of time, to the highest rank amongst the kingdoms of the earth. As it would have been impossible to have accomplished this grand and gigantic labour without committing many infractions of those principles of strict justice, which are habitually sacred in settled nations, so we find the career of Peter the Great occasionally darkened by measures which derogate from his magnanimity. The slave of turbulent passions and sudden impulses, he sometimes revives the memory of Ivan the Terrible, and emulates that monster of cruelty in the needlessness and the excess of his sanguinary punishments: conspiring to-day against nature in the murder of his son, and rebelling to-morrow against his own sovereignty, in the hatred which, by a burst of extravagant despotism, he engenders in the hearts of his people:— yet we never find this inexplicable genius abandoning for an instant the interests of the empire. He followed one distinct purpose, to which he was constant to the end; and he had the satisfaction at last of seeing his toils crowned in the glorious consummation of almost all the projects which a mind incapable of fatigue had contemplated. Never was the title of Father more justly conferred by a grateful people upon their sovereign, and never were the solemn obligations it implies discharged with more unfaltering courage, perseverance, and wisdom.

CHAP. VIII.

STATE OF PARTIES. — INTRIGUES FOR THE THRONE. — CATHARINE PROCLAIMED. — DOMESTIC MEASURES. — CALUMNIES AGAINST THE EMPRESS. — ALLIANCE WITH GERMANY. — LICENTIOUS CONDUCT OF CATHARINE — HER DEATH AND CHARACTER. — HER WILL. — MINORITY OF PETER II. — CONSPIRACY AGAINST MENZIKOFF. — THE BANISHMENT OF THAT MINISTER. — INTRIGUES OF THE DOLGORUKY. — DEATH OF PETER II. — PROBABLE RESULTS HAD HE LIVED. — THE PRINCESS ANNA ELECTED TO THE THRONE, UNDER CERTAIN RESTRICTIONS. — OBJECTIONS OF THE ARISTOCRACY. — THE EMPRESS REVOKES THE CONDITIONS ON WHICH SHE ACCEPTED THE CROWN, AND ASSUMES THE UNLIMITED SOVEREIGNTY. AFFAIRS IN POLAND. — TREATY WITH PERSIA. — THE EMPRESS MAKES WAR UPON TURKEY. — CAMPAIGNS IN THE CRIMEA. — ALLIANCE WITH AUSTRIA AGAINST THE SULTAN. — JEALOUSIES OF THE COMBINED ARMIES. — BRILLIANT VICTORIES OF THE RUSSIAN TROOPS. — AUSTRIA RETIRES FROM THE ALLIANCE. RUSSIA ENTERS INTO A TREATY OF PEACE WITH TURKEY. — RESULTS OF THE WAR.

There were two parties in Russia throughout the reign of Peter I.: the one consisting of the ancient families, who had lost their arbitrary power by the reforms of the emperor, and all the adherents of the old customs; the other consisting of the friends of the improved order of things. During the lifetime of Peter, the former gradually declined under the increasing influence of his genius, and at last sank into such insignificance that it dare not show itself in any open act of discontent. But now that the governing mind was gone which had subdued into silence the pride and hatred of the privileged classes, the dissatisfaction that had been so long repressed, broke out afresh. The chief objects of this meditated revolution were to abolish all the institutions that had been established by Peter, to banish all the foreigners who had been the agents of the introduction of novelties, and, in fine, to restore the empire to its original state of rudeness, in which but two classes existed, — the masters

and the slaves. The persons against whom the animosity of the insurgents was first directed, were the empress Catharine and the prince Menzikoff. The birth of those individuals was obscure, and one of them at least upon whom the imperial honours appeared about to descend, was not a native of Russia. The early life of Catharine was involved in mystery, and her enemies were not slow to heighten the calumnies which were industriously circulated concerning the history of her youth. The conduct of prince Menzikoff was not calculated to soothe the asperities which his elevation had produced around him. Servile to Peter, he was arrogant, capricious, and unfaithful to everybody else; and it is well known that to gratify his love of empty magnificence, and to enable him to maintain a station which he had reached almost by a miracle, he spared no act of oppression or corruption by which he could increase his riches. It was felt, and perhaps not without some show of justice, that it was derogatory to the dignity of an empire which had now become one of the largest in the world, to submit its destinies to the hands of two persons who could neither read nor write. The heads of this party had adopted every precaution, pending the illness of Peter, to enable them to obtain early information of his death; for they were afraid to betray themselves until the event had actually taken place, lest he should recover, and, discovering their intrigues, punish them by a summary revenge. They accordingly caused some of their servants to be in constant attendance in the imperial palace, in order to procure intelligence of his death on the instant it occurred. The plan of the conspirators was to remove both Catharine and Menzikoff from the government, — to banish the former to a convent, and the latter to the deserts of Siberia, and to proclaim the young prince, Peter, the son of Alexis, still in his minority, emperor of Russia. But Menzikoff, well informed of the designs of his enemies, took his measures with such promptitude as to anticipate their movements. When the czar was nearly at the point of death, he caused the royal trea-

sures to be conveyed into the citadel, secured the guards to his interest, as well as the archbishop of Novogorod, and prevailed upon the empress to remove into another apartment, where a private council of her friends was being held, at which, amongst other persons of distinction, the minister of the duke of Holstein assisted. When this council broke up, the empress returned to the bedside of the czar, who soon afterwards expired. A meeting of the principal senators and general officers was immediately called in the palace, when the empress appeared amongst them, attended by Menzikoff, the duke of Holstein, and other influential persons, and addressed them in a speech, the purport of which was to prepare the way for her succession to the throne. When this ceremony was concluded, she withdrew to give the council an opportunity of deliberating upon her claims. The consultation that followed was at first unfavourable to her views; it being contended by some persons present, that, as the late emperor had not made a will, the assembly had a clear right to proceed to the election of a sovereign. But the clergy and the guards had been previously prepared for this emergency, and Theophanes, archbishop of Pleskow, stated that, upon the eve of Catharine's coronation, he had been informed, by Peter, that his reason for placing the crown upon her head was, that she might wear it after his decease. Menzikoff adroitly took advantage of the impression which this declaration made upon the assembly, and interrupted the consultation by a preconcerted signal, at which the guards instantly marched out into the street, exclaiming, "Long live the empress!"* This proceeding was final: the council could no longer withhold their consent; and Catharine, by public proclamation, succeeded her husband on the throne, on the very day of his death. Thus, for the first time, since the reign of Olga, in the tenth century, a woman occupied the imperial seat. In

* Field-marshal Munich gives a very improbable account of this proceeding. He says, that Menzikoff, at the head of the guards, burst into the hall where the senators were sitting in deliberation, and compelled them to proclaim the empress. This statement is not supported by any other authority.

some of the loose memoirs in which these events, are narrated and exaggerated, it is stated that Menzikoff at first shared the sovereign authority with Catharine; but this is purely a gratuitous invention. Menzikoff was too subtle a politician to risk his security in so dangerous and invidious a position. But he always held a paramount influence at the court of the empress. Deficient himself in many of the requisites of the statesman, the affairs of the cabinet were managed chiefly by the artful Tolstoi.

This event, although accomplished in some measure by stratagem, was received with satisfaction by almost the whole country. The well-known attachment of the late emperor to Catharine; the fact that she was crowned at his special desire, which seemed to justify the inference that he wished her to inherit the throne after him; the signal services which she had rendered to the empire, not only in her affectionate attention to the health of Peter, but at the Pruth, and on other public occasions; and the strong devotion which was felt for her by the army in general, to which she had endeared herself by her occasional participation in its toils, and her frequent intercessions with Peter in its behalf, — were circumstances highly favourable to her popularity: and the opening of her reign was distinguished by acts of such condescension and graciousness as to secure the love with which her subjects were prepared to regard her. Amongst other judicious measures, she reduced the capitation tax, which was a heavy burthen on the people; recalled a great number of persons from exile in Siberia, not including, however, any of the relatives or friends of Peter's first wife; discharged all the arrears that were due to the army; restored many privileges to the Cossacks of which they had been deprived by Peter; made no changes whatever amongst the officers of state; and ordered the gibbets, which had been erected in great numbers in the late reign, to be cut down, and the unburied bodies to be interred. Fortunate in the enjoyment of peace, she was careful not to neglect the interests of either the army or the navy, the

former of which she augmented to 180,000 men, while she maintained in the latter 26 line of battle ships, 15 frigates, 140 gallies, several small transport vessels, and 14,000 sailors. As a further security of the state, she entered into a treaty with the German emperor in the first year of her reign (1726), by which it was reciprocally guaranteed that they should assist each other with an army of 30,000 men in case of necessity. But for this treaty there was another motive besides that of mere national security. Her son-in-law, the duke of Holstein, had been deprived of his duchy of Schleswig by the king of Denmark, who held forcible possession of it; and Catharine hoped, through her alliance with Germany, to effect the restitution of those territories. She had already made the most urgent remonstrances to the Danish court on the subject, and had even carried her intentions so far as to equip a fleet for the purpose of forcing a compliance with her demand; but an accidental fire in the naval storehouses frustrated her design. Nor was the senate much disposed to embark in an expensive war upon an affair in which it felt but little sympathy. Her allies of France and England exhibited equal indifference to a subject which they considered to be a personal concern; and all that Russia gained by the empress's anxiety for the restoration of the duke of Holstein's rights, was a fresh alliance with another power.

Although no act of any signal importance to the interests of the empire was performed during the short reign of Catharine, yet it is worthy of record, that she enlarged the bounds of her dominions by exacting homage from the Kubinskan Tartars, and by the annexation of the allegiance of a Georgian prince.

Two impostors, assuming the name and asserting the inheritance of the deceased prince Alexis, severally attempted to dispute Catharine's right to the throne during the early part of her reign; but their claims, less ingenious and complicated than those of the false Dmitris, were speedily set aside, and the knavish pretenders beheaded.

The party of the old manners, defeated in their machinations to deprive her of the succession, suffered no opportunity to escape by which they could disturb the security of her reign. They found a fertile source of discontent in the dark history of her birth, and her early connection with Menzikoff and the emperor, which afforded them ample materials for calumny. Satire was carried to the utmost lengths in the hope of depriving her of the respect of the people. Papers were handed about the streets in which her name was associated with irreverent and degrading epithets; and at last she was obliged to suppress these factious outbreaks by threatening with the punishment of death, any person who should speak or write of her family in disrespectful terms. Unfortunately, however, many circumstances occurred that appeared to give but too great a colour of truth, to the scandals that now began to be freely circulated concerning her affairs. One of these was the sudden arrival at St. Petersburgh of her brother, who had never been heard of before, and on whom, for the sake of averting further discoveries, she conferred the title of count Skavronsky. This person was accompanied by his wife, two boys, and one girl, the last of whom was married, through the influence of the empress, to a court favourite, of the name of Sapieha. This whole occurrence was rendered still more extraordinary by the belief that was generally entertained that Catharine had no knowledge whatever of the members of her own family; although some writers have not hesitated to state that Peter was personally acquainted with this count Shavronsky, an assertion which, on many accounts, is not entitled to credit.

That these circumstances gradually affected the mind of Catherine, there can be no doubt. Her own consciousnsss of how much she was exposed to the uncharitable contumely of her enemies, must have, in a great measure, incapacitated her from meeting it with the dignity consistent with her high station. The extraordinary advance of Menzikoff from the kitchen to

the council chamber; the insolence of his bearing to the whole aristocracy; the strange story of his former connexion with Catharine, and the place of confidence which he now held about her person, conspired to aggravate the malice of the discontented party. We have seen Catharine during the lifetime of Peter, exhibit remarkable firmness of purpose, great constancy of mind, self-possession, and prudence; we have seen her soothing and subduing the violent passions of Peter, administering to his humours, checking his intemperance, and, upon all occasions, developing the noblest qualities of the wife, and the consort of a mighty monarch. But the latter period of her short reign discovered, not only the abandonment of that admirable line of conduct which had secured to her the attachment of the nation, but the adoption of habits, which, if death had not removed her from the throne, must have ultimately rendered her unfit to sustain the imperial duties. It is probable that, had she continued much longer to preside over the affairs of the empire, she would have committed herself to such acts of impropriety, as would have finally led to her dethronement. One of the most dangerous innovations which she carried into effect during her career, that became daily more reckless, was the establishment of a council of private advice, consisting of seven members, distinct from the senate, and by the very nature of its constitution, arbitrary and intriguing. Whether it was that she became intoxicated by the acquisition of unlimited power, which usually operates injuriously upon persons who have risen from a mean origin to such an unexpected height, — or whether, galled by the restless slanders of the disappointed nobility, she surrendered herself to apathy, cannot be determined; but it is certain that her palace was the scene of luxuries and profligacy unbefitting her age, and disgraceful to her condition. The virtues by which she was distinguished, during the lifetime of Peter, no longer governed her conduct. She selected favourites from amongst the gentlemen of her court,

upon whom she bestowed her caresses, and at last gave herself up to a life of excess and licentiousness, which speedily wrought its own destruction. A German author of that time, describing the conduct of Catharine during the latter part of Peter's life, gives the following character of her, which, favourable in most particulars, indicates the existence of those faults, which degraded the close of her reign. "The gratitude and kindness," he observes, "which this princess discovers towards all mankind, particularly towards her former acquaintances; her resignation in adverse affairs; her unabating solicitude for the health of her spouse; and her humanity in always advising the czar to gentle and temperate measures, are such laudable qualities, as in some degree, to efface the blemish on her birth, and to atone for *other fatalities*."

The manner of her death is involved in uncertainty; it being asserted by some authorities, that she was taken off by poison, which is not improbable, considering the number of enemies by which she was surrounded: while it is stated, on the other hand, that she destroyed her constitution of habits of inebriety; and by an extraordinary amusement in which she indulged, of passing whole nights in the open air, either walking, or driving in sledges. She expired on the 17th of May, 1727.

The reflections awakened by the career of this remarkable woman would be flattering to the ascendancy of mind over the accident of birth, were not its termination darkened by a recurrence to those low and sensual appetites, which are proverbially assigned to the lowest classes of society, and which rarely degrade the higher and more educated orders. It is said of bulbous plants, that the colours stained upon the roots, become impregnated on the blossoms; but it is to be hoped that a similar principle will not apply with equal force to the human character, which, subjected to the influence of external changes, and modelled by the necessities of action, usually adapts itself to all circumstances by

which it is surrounded. This adaptation, however, must be considered as the result of the stern education of experience, acting upon minds prepared to profit by its lessons. The power of early habits, unless it be restrained by strong motives, or curbed by the presence of over-ruling authority, extends to the last moments of life, even should it have been suppressed during a long interval of years. Such seems to have been the case with the empress Catherine; nor shall we find, upon a close analysis of her history, that she was exactly placed in a situation to discourage the lurking propensities of the class from which she sprung, until a very short period before her death. Her connexion with Peter, if not actually ambiguous, was at least private, and graced by none of the privileges of the nominal eminence to which it apparently elevated her. Her coronation invested her, for the first time, with authority: previously to that event, she was the chamber confidant of the czar, the creature of his will, and the nurse of his distempers. It is true that he married her privately, but, unlike Madame Maintenon, she could not confer upon that secret union those ennobling embellishments of feeling, and of intellect, that would have rendered it respectable. The blemishes of her private life, worse than the blemish on her birth, could never be obliterated. It cannot, therefore, excite much wonder, that, when she came at last into the possession of unbounded authority, released from the surveillance of a rigid sovereign, and left to the free play of her natural tendencies, she should have terminated her course in a way consistent with the spirit of its opening.

Care was taken by those around the empress that she should not die intestate. Her will settled the order of succession, which it confirmed in the person of Peter, the son of Alexis, who was, by the provisions of the instrument, placed under the guardianship of the princesses Anna and Elizabeth, the Duke of Holstein, and other members of the council, until he should attain his sixteenth year. A second article enjoined the regency

to bring about a marriage between the young emperor and a daughter of prince Menzikoff. Provisions were also made in the will for the casualty of the young emperor dying without heirs, in which case it was ordained that Anne, duchess of Holstein, and her posterity, or on failure of these, the princess Elizabeth and her posterity, should succeed to the throne. In addition to these main points, the will of the empress exhibited several proofs of the interest she felt in the concerns of the duke of Holstein.

Peter Alexewitch, now eleven years of age, had been carefully tended by Catharine during the short time she exercised the imperial authority. The main object of her care, not to deny her full credit for the better motives that were mixed up with it, was sufficiently evident in that article of her last testament, which expressed her desire that a marriage should be effected between him and prince Menzikoff. That shrewd minister had been her close adviser throughout all her proceedings; a similarity of fortune bound them together; and to the last they were identified in the prosecution of an interest in common. Her death deprived him of the great stay of his fortunes; but he looked forward to the consummation of this alliance as a new means of preserving his influence in the government. He accordingly lost no time in securing himself in the good-will of the minor, and carried his ambition so far as to calculate upon obtaining the entire management of the administration, until the emperor should come of age; relying confidently upon the expected marriage, which would place him and his family in close relationship with the reigning house. Already he assumed the tone of the father-in-law, and took the young emperor home to his own house, for the purpose of having him constantly in his presence, that he might mould him to his will. But these proceedings of the designing Menzikoff did not escape the jealous observance of those who had watched his rise with envy and discontent. Many of the members of that party which would have gladly

promoted the advancement of Peter to the throne, with a view to repeal the reforms of his grandfather, would now have willingly deprived him of the succession, since it appeared likely to increase the power of Menzikoff. Some of the most ancient families in the empire regarded his prosperity with rancorous feelings, and his bearing towards them was calculated to exasperate them into the bitterest animosity. Attempts had frequently been made to bring him into disgrace; but fortuitous circumstances had hitherto protected him. The duke of Holstein and his minister were amongst those who might be considered as his principal enemies. This, at least, was natural in a prince who saw a person of mean extraction usurping that place in the councils of the empire, which, by virtue of his marriage with the princess Anne, he deemed to belong to himself by right. Ostermann, the vice-chancellor, who was one of the ministers concerned in the peace of Neustadt, was also one of the most active of the party. This individual, a Westphalian by birth, and son of a Lutheran parson, had risen high by his zeal, and his abilities, in the confidence of Peter the Great; but, although he was much favoured by that monarch, Menzikoff did not hesitate to treat him in his usual supercilious manner; even venturing, at times, to carry his insolence so far as to threaten him with the knout* and Siberia. Ostermann, smarting under these indignities, was secretly resolved to take his revenge whenever a favourable moment presented itself. The declining health of Catharine afforded him the auspicious opportunity to which he had long looked forward; and, working upon the vanity of Menzikoff, he induced him to espouse the interests of Peter, to which he was tempted by the prospect of the marriage with his daughter; which imprudent step had the effect of greatly increasing the previously existing dislike in which Menzikoff was held by the duke of Holstein.

* Menzikoff, in this arrogant threat, merely imitated the example of his master; for it is said that whenever Peter was enraged with him, he used to beat him liberally with his cane.

There was also concerned in the plot to pluck the favourite from his eminence, the counts Tolstoi, Butturlin, and De Vier. The last individual was a Portuguese by birth, who, from being a midshipman in the merchant service, was raised by Peter the Great to the post of minister of police; an office in which he distinguished himself by such active measures, that Peter the Great rewarded him with the title of count, and the hand of the sister of Menzikoff in marriage. These were the principal leaders, forming a league at court, which even the influence of Menzikoff could not long counteract.

Amongst those who had constant access to the young emperor was Ivan Dalgoruky, a youth of one of the most ancient families in Russia. He was Peter's daily companion; and being impressed strongly with the opinions of the party to which he belonged, he took occasion, with all the ardour of his age, to instil into the mind of Peter the prejudices which he himself entertained against Menzikoff. He pointed out to him that this man usurped an authority which did not belong to him; that he kept the future sovereign in a state of vassalage; and that the whole empire expected that the individual who was destined to rule over it, would release himself from an authority which was at once degrading to him, and injurious to the well being of the state. These arguments had the desired effect upon Peter, who was still further induced to hearken to them from a dislike which he had taken to his proposed bride, Maria Menzikoff, from whom he wished to be released by any means that offered. The ruin of Menzikoff was the work of a moment. The assent of the young emperor was no sooner obtained, than the sentence of banishment was issued, and the proud, grasping, and despotic minister, who had held the highest places in the two former reigns, and who now aspired to a still higher, was compelled to render back to the imperial coffers the treasures he had accumulated by corruption and oppression *, and

* The wealth of Menzikoff is said to have consisted of 9,000,000 rubles in bank notes and obligations; 1,000,000 in cash, 105 lbs. of gold utensils, 420 lb of silver plate, and precious stones to the value of about 1,000,000, besides considerable estates in land, his palace, and its costly furniture.

to depart with his whole family (1727) from the scene of his extinguished greatness for Beresof in Siberia, where he died two years afterwards. Thus the hopes of this selfish man were destroyed for ever, and his daughter, instead of ascending, as she confidently anticipated, the throne of Russia, was condemned to wear out her miserable life in exile and poverty.

The Dalgoruky now occupied the place from which Menzikoff had been so suddenly hurled, and so completely did they gain an ascendency over Peter, that he constantly passed his time in their company. Nor was this all: Catherine Dalgoruky, a young lady of that house, made so strong an impression upon his feelings, that he solicited her hand from her father, and they were soon afterwards publicly affianced. The coronation was fixed to take place early in the year 1728.

The Dalgoruky, belonging to the ancient nobility, and retaining all their old prejudices, resided in the neighbourhood of Moscow, not having been yet induced to recognise in St. Petersburgh the capital of the empire. During Peter's minority they frequently entertained him with hunting parties, an amusement to which he was extremely partial. This, together with other circumstances, led him to adopt an intention of transferring the imperial seat altogether to Moscow; a design which had the effect of conciliating at once that section of the aristocracy which had hitherto kept aloof from public affairs. Had Peter been permitted to act upon his own judgment, or rather had he not been seduced by the temptations which were thus spread for him, to depart from the examples and councils of his boyhood, he would not, even in thought, have fallen into an error likely to prove so prejudicial to the best interests of his subjects. His education had been carefully attended to, and his natural capacity was of no mean order. To Ostermann the charge of training him in the duties of the imperial office had been confided, and it appears that he discharged his part of the responsibility with zeal and wisdom. That able tutor, instead of wasting the time of

his pupil upon the theories of legislation, directed all his attention to the practical principles of government. His course of instruction consisted chiefly of national histories, political codes, the rights of magistrates, the relations between the rulers and the ruled, international obligations, and the military art. But it was not the policy of the Dalgoruky to allow these seeds to take root in the mind of the sovereign. They did not desire to have a master who would think for himself, but one who would suffer them to think for him. In order to accomplish the more effectually this conspiracy against the freedom of the young emperor, they employed all their arts to divert him from the affairs of state; and cultivating assiduously his passion for the sports of the field, they succeeded for some time in their object. To such an excess did they tempt him to indulge in this favourite pastime, that at last his strength, which had not yet reached maturity, began rapidly to sink. For several days in succession they abstracted him from his duties, to the neglect of the most pressing business, and to the manifest injury of his constitution. It was observed by one who witnessed these dangerous recreations with regret, that the course they pursued with the emperor would justify the suspicion that they intended to kill him. The prophecy proved to be but too correct. Yielding to the effects of the fatigue to which these amusements exposed him, Peter II. died of the small-pox, which made hasty ravages in a frame so delicate, on the night of the 29th of January, 1730, at Moscow. The family of Romanof was extinct in this prince, who was the last male representative of the line.

The death of Peter II. was universally regretted in Russia. During his reign, the empire enjoyed tranquillity at home and peace abroad; and he discovered such excellent qualities for government, that the people looked forward to enjoy under his rule a period of freedom and prosperity, such as they had never before experienced. There is no doubt, however, that if he had survived, his own good intentions would have been per-

verted by those advisers who had obtained so strong a hold upon his mind. His predilection for Moscow had already produced serious injury to the maritime affairs of St. Petersburg: the fleet and the army suffered severely by his continued absence from the capital; and had he lived to complete the change which he meditated, Russia must have ultimately lost, by the neglect of her great station on the Neva, the national consequence she had maintained amongst the states of Europe during the two previous reigns. It was evident, also, that he would have gradually discouraged the residence of foreigners in his dominions; and that the old families were acquiring such power at court, that they would have finally succeeded in restoring those national usages which had been set aside by Peter the Great. If the people, therefore, were deprived, on the one hand, of the temporary advantages of a tranquil reign, Russia, on the other, was preserved from the risk of permanent evils.

Disappointed in their expectations of an alliance with the emperor, the Dalgoruky did not wholly relinquish their hopes of securing some advantage by their position. The young Dalgoruky, impatient of delay, forged a testament in the name of Peter II., in which Catherine Dalgoruky was named as the successor to the throne. With this instrument in one hand, and a drawn sword in the other, he rushed into the hall, where the senators were assembled in deliberation, and cried aloud, "Long live the empress Dalgoruky!" But no voice seconding him in this wild and shallow trick, he sheathed his sword, and suppressed the fraudulent testament.

The question of the succession was now to be considered; and the only authentic document by which the proceedings of the council could be regulated, was the will of Catherine I., which devised the succession to the princess Anne and her posterity, or, in failure, the princess Elizabeth. But Anne had died two years before, and her husband the duke of Holstein had retired into Germany. It was true that there was a

young prince, the issue of this marriage; but the council were so averse to the introduction of foreigners into the state, that they decided at once against any claim that might be set up in that quarter. The princess Elizabeth, second in the order of nomination, exhibited no desire to avail herself of the testament of her mother, although she was strongly urged to do so by Lestocq, her physician, preferring to enjoy the ease of a life unburthened by the cares of the state. In these circumstances the council, the senate, and the great officers of state assembled to consult upon the election of a successor to Peter II. Although the male line of the Romanofs was extinct in that sovereign, yet the female line was preserved in the three daughters of Ivan, the stepbrother of Peter the Great, and for some time a partner with him in the government. The eldest was separated from her husband, the duke of Mecklenburg; the second, Anna, duchess of Cornland, was a widow living at Mittau; and the third was still unmarried, residing at St. Petersburg. The objection that was entertained against foreign alliances, determined the senate to reject the claims of the first, and the choice consequently fell upon Anna Ivanovna.

From the time of the death of Catherine I. the prejudice against foreigners had insensibly acquired weight amongst those influential persons who surrounded the throne. The Dolgoruky were the most active agents of this sentiment, through which they hoped at last to reap the largest share of profit themselves. Taking advantage of the jealousy in which the old aristocracy held their privileges, and apprehensive that the new sovereign might act upon the system of her immediate predecessors, they struck upon an expedient by which they hoped to deprive her of the power of exercising her own judgment, and to place her under the control of that irresponsible council which had been instituted by Catherine I. "The welfare of the nation," said Galitzin, in an address to the assembly, "demands that the supreme authority and the unlimited power of

the sovereign, by which Russia has suffered so much, and which has been sustained chiefly by the influx of foreigners, should be circumscribed, and that the crown should be conferred upon the new sovereign under certain conditions." This proposal was received with universal approbation, and the following conditions were unanimously agreed to: — "That the empress should govern solely by the resolves of the high privy council; that she was not, of her own motion, either to wage war or make peace; that she could not, of herself, impose any new tax upon the people; that she could not dispose of any important office, nor inflict capital punishment on any nobleman, nor confiscate his estate, unless he had been previously convicted of the crime laid to his charge; that she should not alienate any lands belonging to the crown; and that she could not marry, or nominate an heir, without obtaining, in the first instance, the consent of the council." A strange article was added to these conditions; that her chamberlain, Von Biren, should not accompany the empress into Russia.

These conditions, which were apparently intended to curb the tyranny of the throne, aimed at nothing more than the abolition of one description of despotism, for the purpose of substituting a worse in its stead. If it abrogated the supreme and unlimited power of the sovereign, it transferred that power to the secret council, which was thus elevated above the sovereignty and the senate, and invested with a complete control over the administration of the public affairs. The proposed change was from an unlimited monarchy to an irresponsible oligarchy.

The drift of this capitulation was speedily detected by those whose interests it affected, — the aristocracy. They saw that it concentrated the power of the state in the hands of seven persons; that the Dolgoruky had already possessed themselves of the voice of the council; and that the issue would be the sacrifice of the empire to a family contract. The capitulation, therefore, was scarcely passed, when a powerful opposition was raised

up against it; and the people, accustomed to the despotism of an unlimited sovereignty, from which, amidst all its severities, they had derived many valuable safeguards and benefits, declared that they preferred rendering obedience to one master instead of seven. This feeling rapidly spread amongst the guards, who had good reasons for objecting to a clause which would throw the patronage of the army into the hands of a few persons, who, instead of promoting the meritorious, would, as a matter of course, provide for their own friends and relatives.

Nor was the princess Anna insensible to the wrong which she suffered from this novel procedure; and, when the deputation from the council waited upon her to inform her of her election, and the conditions which were annexed to it, she would have refused to subscribe to the capitulation, had she not been already prepared by the advice of general Yagujinsky as to the course she ought to pursue. That officer had previously recommended her to accept the conditions, but to revoke them immediately after she should be acknowledged as empress, assuring her, at the same time, that she would be powerfully supported in the proper quarter. She accordingly agreed to the demands of the deputation, and was crowned in the usual forms.

The empress Anna was no sooner established upon the throne, than her friends gave her an opportunity of carrying the advice of general Yagujinsky into effect. A petition signed by several hundred noblemen was presented to her, in which she was entreated to abrogate the restrictions which the council had placed upon her authority, and to assume the unlimited power that had hitherto been exercised by her predecessors. Fortified by this requisition, the empress presented herself before the council and the senate, and, reading the terms of the capitulation, demanded whether such was the will of the nation. Being answered in the negative by the majority of those who were present, she exclaimed, "Then there is no further need of this paper," and tore

the capitulation in pieces. This act was ratified and published in a manifesto, which declared that the empress ascended the throne not by election, but by hereditary right, and which exacted from the people an oath of allegiance, not to the sovereign and the country, as had formerly been the case, but to the empress alone, as unlimited sovereign, including not only the rights of sovereignty already existing, but those that might be asserted hereafter.

Anna was now empress without conditions, and her chamberlain, Von Biren, was raised to that place in her councils which Menzikoff filled during the reign of Catherine I. The first exercise she made of her power was to abolish the council of seven, and to restore to the senate the privileges it enjoyed under Peter the Great. She appointed, however, a cabinet of three persons, with Ostermann at its head, whose duty it was to superintend the affairs of the most pressing importance, leaving to the senate the management of less momentous matters. When these arrangements were completed, the urgent attention of the empress was directed to the foreign relations of the empire, which, at this crisis, demanded serious consideration.

The struggle for the throne in Poland had entailed jealousies which threatened to involve, not only the peace of Russia, but to draw France and Sweden into the quarrel. The cause of Augustus, the elector of Saxony, which had originally been espoused by Peter I., was still maintained by the Russian cabinet; and, although France made strenuous exertions to reinstate Stanislaus, the father-in-law of Louis XV., yet, by the determined interference of his northern ally, Augustus was proclaimed king of Poland, and Stanislaus was compelled to fly. The mortification which France endured under these circumstances, excited in her a strong feeling of hostility against Russia; but there existed still more cogent reasons why she should make an attempt to restrain the advances of that power. It had long been a favourite point in the policy of France

to secure upon the throne of Poland a monarch who should be devoted to her will, and although she had been hitherto defeated in that object, she did not relinquish the hope of its ultimate accomplishment. She saw also rising in the north a gigantic empire, which had already acquired extraordinary power in Europe, and which threatened at last to overshadow and destroy the influence which she had been accustomed to exercise in that part of the globe. Urged by these considerations, and knowing how important it was to Russia to be at peace with Sweden, she left no means untried to engage the court at Stockholm on her side. Her diplomacy succeeded even better than she expected, and Russia was once more compelled to watch with vigilance the movements of a dangerous neighbour, who was still suffering under the disastrous effects of a war, from which Russia had reaped all the benefits, and she the misfortunes.

But affairs pressed with still greater energy in a more remote quarter. It was found by experience that the territories which Peter had acquired in Persia by the treaty entered into between him, the sultan, and the shah, were exceedingly burdensome to the country. In his desire for the enlargement of his dominions, Peter overlooked the necessity of ascertaining whether the new provinces were likely to be productive of advantages, either in the way of revenue, or as adding strength to the frontiers. In order to preserve the possession of those provinces, it was necessary to maintain a considerable garrison in the interior, even in time of peace; they were also frequently exposed to scenes of warfare and devastation; and the climate was so injurious to the health of the Russians, that in the course of a few years no less than 130,000 men perished there. The great cost of these dependencies, and their uselessness in a territorial point of view, determined Anna to relinquish them upon the best terms she could procure from the shah. She accordingly proposed to that prince the restoration of the conquered provinces, upon con-

dition that he would grant to the Russian merchants certain commercial privileges in the trade with Persia. To these terms the shah acceded, and in 1735 Russia made a formal surrender of her Persian possessions. This negotiation was connected with another of still greater importance, — a defensive treaty between Persia and Russia, which was concluded at the same time. The motives which induced Anna to enter into this alliance require a brief recapitulation of preceding events.

The unfortunate situation in which Peter I. was placed upon the banks of the Pruth, compelled him to submit to the terms dictated by the Porte, by which he surrendered many important advantages which he had previously obtained by conquest. The principal sacrifices he had made upon that occasion were the evacuation of Azoph, and the destruction of the fortifications at Taganrok, which had the immediate effect of shutting him out from the trade on the Euxine. The annoyances also to which the empire were subjected by the frequent incursions of the Crimean and other Tartars into the border lands, where they committed the most frightful excesses, and the haughty refusal of the Porte to acknowledge the imperial title which the people had conferred upon him, led Peter to meditate a new war against the Turks. He made ample preparations for the fulfilment of this design, by fortifying the frontiers in the neighbourhood of Turkey; but his death arrested the execution of the project, which was entirely laid aside by Catherine I. and Peter II. Anna, however, relying upon the assistance of 30,000 auxiliaries from Germany, considered this a favourable opportunity for reviving a stroke of policy which promised such signal advantages to the country, particularly as the Turk was at this period employed in hostilities against Persia. She did not long want an excuse for opening the war. The Tartars had of late made several predatory inroads upon the Russian territories, and laying waste the districts through which they passed, carried off men and cattle on their return. These

Tartars being under the protection of the Porte, the empress remonstrated upon the subject, and demanded satisfaction; but the sultan, in his reply, excused himself from interfering in the matter, upon the pretext that it was impossible to keep those roving bands under proper restraint. This evasive reply was precisely what Anna anticipated, and as the sultan declined to render her any atonement, she undertook to obtain retribution for herself. A force was immediately despatched into the country of the Tartars, which they overran, spreading ruin on their path, and destroying the marauders in great numbers. The expedition failed, however, in consequence of the incautious advance of the troops too far into the interior, where, not being prepared with a sufficient stock of provisions, they underwent severe privations, and sustained a loss of 10,000 men. But this discomfiture did not divert the empress from her grand design; and in the year 1736, count Munich, at the head of a sufficient force, was sent into the Ukraine, with a free commission to retaliate upon the Tartars. After a victorious course through that region, he passed into the peninsula of the Crimea; the Tartars, unequal to contend with him in the open field, flying before him until they reached their lines, extending from the sea of Azoph to the Euxine, behind the entrenchments of which they considered themselves secure. The lines were established with a view to protect the Crimea from any attack on the land side; and, having been built with incredible toil, and being strongly fortified with cannon, the Tartars deemed them to be impregnable. They did not long, however, withstand the vigorous assault of the Russians, who speedily scaled them, and, driving the tumultuous hordes before them, soon possessed themselves of the greater part of the Crimea. But the same inconveniences were felt on this as on the former expedition. The Tartars on their flight laid the country in ashes, and it was impossible to provide sustenance for the troops without keeping up a constant communication with the Ukraine,

where provisions at least were to be had, but which was attended with great difficulty. In this exigency, count Munich was obliged to return to the Ukraine, to take up his winter quarters. While Munich was thus engaged against the Tartars, a much more important movement, in which the real object of the Russian government was directly exhibited, was taking place elsewhere. General Lascy had laid siege to Azoph, and reduced it to submission on the 1st of July, in the same year. This bold and decisive step forced the reluctant Divan to take into consideration the means by which the progress of the Russians could be most effectually stayed. The sultan was unwilling to commit himself in a war with Russia, content with the possession of the advantages he had gained by the treaty of the Pruth; and even now that Russia had regained one of the ceded forts, and was manifestly prepared to follow up the victory, he preferred to attempt the negotiation of peace through the mediation of Austria, for the sake of avoiding hostilities as long he could. Russia, however, would not agree to any accommodation; and, instead of being moved from her purpose by the representations of Austria, she demanded of that power the fulfilment of the treaty subsisting between them, by which, in case of need, she was bound to furnish 30,000 auxiliaries. This demand placed the subject in a new light before the German cabinet. The required assistance would obviously have the effect of enabling Russia to extend her conquests without producing any benefits whatever to Austria; whereas, if Austria united herself with Russia in the war, she might derive some advantages from an alliance against which it appeared highly improbable that the Turks could make a successful stand. She decided, therefore, upon throwing the whole weight of her power into the scale, greatly to the consternation of the Turks, who had, in the first instance, solicited her friendly interference. The sultan, however, felt that, doubtful as must be the issue of a contest against such formidable enemies, it would be wiser to risk it than,

yielding to intimidation, to make such sacrifices as would be inconsistent with the security and honour of the country. He accordingly lost no time in preparing for the campaign. He recruited the garrisons and forts, raised new levies, put his army into proper condition, and equipped a fleet for the protection of the Euxine: on the other hand, the combined forces rapidly prepared to act in concert.

The operations of the year 1737 were not followed by any important results. The Russian army, strengthened by 40,000 recruits, was separated into two divisions; one of which, under the command of count Munich, proceeded to Otchakof on the Euxine, while general Lascy, with the other, entered the Crimea. The objects proposed to be attained by these expeditions were not adequate to the expenditure that attended them. Otchakof submitted, and was garrisoned by the conquerors; and the Crimea was again desolated. This was all Russia gained by the sacrifice of about 50,000 of her veteran troops. The blame of these barren and expensive victories was to be attributed to that very union of forces which ought to have been productive of increased strength. The most unfortunate jealousies existed, not only amongst the Austrian officers, but between count Munich and the Austrians. To so extravagant a length was this dangerous feeling carried, that, with the exception of the affair at Otchakof, Munich remained inactive throughout the campaign, from an obstinate determination not to act upon the same plan that was pursued by the Austrians. Nor was this the only evil that these feuds produced. The Turks, taking advantage of the dissension, poured in with greater force upon the German ranks, which they broke through on several occasions, gaining frequent petty advantages, which, at all events, had the effect of rendering their movements in a great measure abortive. Constant complaints were now made alternately by the courts of Vienna and St. Petersburg, respecting the conduct of the officers of both sides; and, although

Munich was especially accused of thwarting the efforts of the allies, he always had the address to escape from reprehension, by throwing the censure on his accusers. These circumstances inspired the Turks with fresh courage. A congress had been appointed to be held at Nemirof, in Poland, but they withdrew their ambassador; signifying, however, that if Russia would evacuate Azoph and Otchakof, and the rest of her conquests, they might be induced to entertain a treaty of peace. This insolent proposition was at once rejected by Russia, and the war was resumed. In the campaign of the following year, Munich appeared to be anxious to make amends for his former inactivity; but, although he made some vigorous marches, and vindicated the character of the soldiery, he effected nothing of substantial importance. A similar fortune attended general Lascy in the Crimea, from which, after a disastrous progress through a desolated country, and after a great mortality amongst his troops, occasioned partly by fatigue, and partly by the deficiency of provisions, he was ultimately obliged to withdraw.

The opening of the year 1739 promised to make amends for these successive failures. General Munich, whose ability in the field was admitted on all hands, collected a numerous army at Kief, and, crossing the Bogue, met the Turks in a pitched battle, near Stavutshan, in which he obtained a signal victory. Pursuing his success with vigour, he advanced upon the fortress of Khatyim, which fell before his arms; and, passing the Pruth, he possessed himself of Yassy, the capital of Moldavia, the whole of which territory he subjugated in an incredibly short space of time. Retracing his march, after having achieved this important conquest, he made preparations for a descent upon Bender. These brilliant triumphs, accomplished with such rapidity, that the couriers were kept constantly occupied in the transmission of despatches to the court of St. Petersburgh, encouraged, for a brief season, the flattering prospects of complete restitution, which the un-

propitious commencement of the war had almost annihilated. But, unfortunately, the same evil spirit, which had frustrated the former campaigns, broke out just at the moment when Turkey was so discomfited, that Russia, had she pushed her successes a little farther, might have dictated a settlement upon her own terms. Envy at the progress of the Russian army was again exhibited in the ranks of the Austrians, who were suffering under a contagious disease, that helped in a still greater degree to paralyse their activity. Unfortunately, too, the emperor Charles VI. was afflicted with a dangerous illness; and his daughter, shrinking from the apprehensions of the future, was extremely desirous by any means to bring about a peace with Turkey. This disposition, on the part of Austria, was gladly seized upon by the sultan; and, before there was time to reconcile the unhappy differences that existed amongst the allies, a treaty of peace was drawn up and signed between Austria and Turkey, on the 1st of September, 1739. By this inglorious treaty, Austria escaped from all farther responsibility in the war; but she purchased the peace at so enormous a price, that it is difficult to comprehend the tortuous policy which led her to adopt so extraordinary a measure. The war, in which she had embarked in the hope of securing territorial advantages, had cost her a considerable expenditure in troops and treasure; and she not only did not obtain an indemnity for this outlay, nor acquire a single rood of ground by her participation in the campaigns, but by the conditions of the treaty she was compelled to relinquish Belgrade, her Hungarian rampart against the Turks, and all those conquests which she had formerly obtained under the victorious flag of prince Eugene. The infatuation which tempted Austria into this step, can be referred only to her jealousy of Russian aggrandisement. She desired, above all things, to embarrass that power, whose ambition, stretching to all points, appeared to be boundless. Had she, however, preserved her good faith with Russia, she might have shared in

the spoils which she feared her growing rival would monopolise, and partitioned with the empress the fields of their mutual victories. But it was fortunate, perhaps, that the jealousies of the Austrian army, and the timidity of the court led to this unexpected result; for, had the combining powers prosecuted their design with unanimity, they might have ultimately established a league subversive of the repose and independence of the rest of Europe.

This peace produced great dissatisfaction at St. Petersburg; for, although Austria reserved to herself the right of fulfilling her treaty with Russia by succouring her in the field, yet it was not deemed prudent to prosecute a war single handed, which had been commenced with such a formidable display of power. The Turks, relieved from one antagonist, were now the better enabled to resist the other; and the empress conceived that the wisest course she could pursue was to negociate her differences with the sultan, to which proposal he was not unwilling to accede. A peace was consequently entered into between the belligerents with such promptitude, that it was concluded as early as the 18th of September. The conditions of this treaty involved compromises on both sides. It was agreed that Azoph and its surrounding territory should be evacuated and remain uncultivated, as a neutral boundary between the two empires: a similar arrangement was guaranteed respecting Kabardia, both governments agreeing to retain in their hands a certain number of hostages from that province, for better security against an abuse of the stipulation. It was also settled that Russia should be at liberty to erect a fortress on the Don, and that the Porte should construct another in the Kuban. Some minor conquests of the Russians were surrendered: Russian fleets were not to be allowed to be kept in the Palus Mæotis or the Euxine, and in the latter sea the commerce of Russia was to be conducted only in Turkish bottoms.

Such was the result of a war which had cost Russia

upwards of 100,000 men, and which had entailed upon the empire an enormous expenditure of money. The nature of the enterprise required that the army should carry with it the provisions and ammunition necessary for its sustentation, as well as water and wood, the former of which was indispensable in the parched steppes to be traversed by the troops. These preliminary wants greatly increased the expenses that would have attended the expedition under ordinary circumstances; yet, after some years of profuse outlay and lavish sacrifice of strength, all that Russia gained was the satisfaction of desolating the Crimea, without exterminating the Tartars, who still continued to infest the borders; and some slight commercial advantages which never could repay the cost at which they had been procured. It was true that if Russia failed to possess herself of Azoph, she had succeeded in dismantling it and rendering it useless to the Turks; but this was a loss to both parties. The war, on the whole, therefore, must be considered to have been in the last degree disastrous to the empire, although the views with which it was undertaken were founded upon an acute and enlightened policy.

CHAP. IX.

INTRIGUES OF FRANCE IN SWEDEN. — IMPROVEMENTS IN THE RUSSIAN ARMY. — THE EMPRESS ADOPTS THE POLICY OF PETER THE GREAT. — MANUFACTURES AND COMMERCE ENCOURAGED. — ACCESSIONS TO THE EMPIRE. — AMELIORATIONS AT COURT. — JOHN ERNEST BIREN. — DEATH OF THE EMPRESS. — IVAN NOMINATED SUCCESSOR. — REGENCY OF BIREN. — GENERAL DISCONTENT. — BANISHMENT OF BIREN. — THE PRINCESS ANNE APPOINTED REGENT. — RESIGNATION OF MUNICH. — SWEDEN RENEWS THE WAR AGAINST RUSSIA. — SWEDISH MANIFESTO. — REVOLUTION IN ST. PETERSBURG. — APATHY OF THE REGENT. — ACTIVITY OF LESTOCQ. — DOWNFALL OF THE REGENCY. — THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH ASCENDS THE THRONE.

THE empress Anna, in thus suddenly concluding a peace with Turkey, was actuated by a still stronger motive than that which was supplied by the desertion of Austria. She justly apprehended that Sweden, influenced by the intrigues of France, who had now attained a decided ascendency in the councils of Stockholm, would endeavour to distract Russia in the north, while the main body of her army was occupied with the Porte on the south. Secret negociations, carried on between the three powers, appeared to confirm this suspicion. It was true that, at the conclusion of the last war, Russia and Sweden had entered into an amnesty for twelve years, which was renewed for a similar period, on its expiration in the year 1736. But this amnesty served only as a thin disguise for the rankling and bitter hostility which the Swedes entertained towards Russia. They had not forgotten the protracted and ruinous struggle between Charles XII. and Peter I., which convulsed the whole kingdom, and exhausted its resources; nor the sacrifices which they were compelled

to make at the peace of Neustadt. These feelings were assiduously cultivated by the French court, who found easy means of securing a strong party in the national council, which in fact was paramount in Sweden, the king being completely under its control. The empress, warned of this increasing desire for a rupture on the part of Sweden, was the more anxious to come upon terms with Turkey, that she might be free to act in Finland and that neighbourhood, should it become necessary.

The war with the sultan, unproductive of any national benefit, was attended with one good effect in the proof which it afforded to the Turks of the superiority of the Russian soldiers. The interval of repose that had elapsed since the death of Peter I., and the neglect into which the army was latterly permitted to fall, had impressed the Turks with the notion that the glory of the Russian arms was on the decline. They were now, however, undeceived, and the victories of Munich, unfruitful as they were, satisfied the Ottoman Porte that she had miscalculated upon the weakness of her adversary. She was forced to admit that the troops of the invader were defeated, not by the superior courage and skill of her own, but by the fatigues to which they were exposed, the want of provisions, and the uncongenial nature of the climate. The campaigns led to the most salutary results in the army, the state of which was considerably improved under the reign of the empress. Count Munich introduced some very important changes, not only in reference to discipline, which he rendered more strict than ever it had been before, but in the regulations and pay of the officers. Hitherto it had been the custom to confer upon foreigners, who were, in fact, the tacticians from whom the Russian soldiery derive their practical knowledge of the art of war, a larger amount of pay, even where they held an equality of rank, than was accorded to native officers. The effect of this practice was to generate injurious jealousies, and to heighten the prejudice which prevailed against strangers. Marshal Munich

was fully impressed with the importance of preserving a portion of the command of the army in the hands of foreigners, and of the dangers arising from the dissensions which were created by an invidious distinction in the scale of compensation; and he, accordingly, directed his attention to the best means of reconciling both objects, without appearing to favour especially the interests or the views of either party. This wise design was satisfactorily effected by equalising the pay of all officers of the same rank, without reference to their birth, raising it also beyond the former standard, to allay any discontent which the new system might possibly produce. He also instructed the troops in a military exercise of his own invention, and established a corps of engineers, which until that time was unknown in Russia. The two regiments of guards, which had always exercised great influence even in determining the succession to the throne, was enlarged by the addition of one regiment of foot, and another of horse guards: the military force was also strengthened by a few regiments of cuirassiers, which was then an entire novelty. But the most valuable measure that was adopted at this period for the permanent improvement of the army was the foundation of an institute for the instruction of cadets of noble families with a view to the formation of a body of able commanders. This institution, which has since been expanded as its utility became more apparent, might be considered, as in fact it was, a kind of military college in which sciences connected with the profession of arms were industriously cultivated. These plans, which Munich had the honour of originating, received the full sanction of the empress, and their excellence was still farther confirmed by the approbation of that distinguished leader, prince Eugene of Savoy.

Anna was evidently guided in the whole course of her policy by the example of Peter I., whom she adopted as her model. Fortunate in the choice of at least two of her advisers, Ostermann in the council of state, and

Munich at the head of the army, she persevered in her attempts to complete those projects of improvement which her great predecessor had left unfinished. The canal connected with the lake of Ladoga, which was designed to facilitate the transport of provisions to St. Petersburgh, was brought to a close by her in the year 1738. She also fitted out an expedition to sail from Kamschatka towards the north, for the purpose of determining whether Siberia was connected with North America. A short time before the death of Peter, that monarch sent several able persons upon a similar mission, but without success. The manufacture and commerce of Russia, too, commanded a large share of her attention: she instructed her ambassadors, at foreign courts, to make vigilant inquiries after the most skilful persons engaged in those trades in which Russia was most deficient; and, by this means, she was enabled to draw into her dominions a great number of artizans, particularly those who were experienced in the production of such fabrics as silks and woollen stuffs. In furtherance of these views she entered into a treaty of commerce with Great Britain, from which the industry of her people derived a fresh and invigorating stimulus. It may be observed, also, that she increased the numerical population, by the return of the Zaporogian Cossacks to their allegiance, shortly after the opening of the campaign in the Crimea, which they had forfeited by the rebellion of Mazeppa; and that she enlarged her territories by the acquisition of the province inhabited by the Kirghises, a nomade tribe, on the Chinese borders. This latter accession was of great importance, from the protection it afforded to the frontiers against the incursions to which they had hitherto been continually exposed: while it not only created a new trade with the Kirghises themselves, but gave greater freedom to the commercial intercourse with China, which had been constantly interrupted by these hostilities.

European civilisation, which Peter the Great laboured so incessantly to introduce into his dominions, had not

yet been thoroughly infused into the court, when the empress Anna ascended the throne. Much of the old leaven yet remained. The habit of inebriety, in which even the aristocracy indulged, had not yet completely given way, and it was still no unusual circumstance to find the revels of the palace conducted occasionally with as little regard to propriety as the rude festivals of the boors. The long residence of the empress Anna amongst the Courish nobility, who were remarkable for the politeness and frankness of their manners, had cultivated a taste, naturally refined, which turned with aversion from the semi-barbarous usages of her countrymen. The sweetness and gentleness of her disposition were calculated imperceptibly to make more converts than even the rigorous enforcements of the first reformer. She gradually infused around her the tone of her own mind, and in a short time produced a very considerable reformation in the character of the court. Attached to the tranquil pleasures of social life, she substituted music and dancing, and the courtesies that are inseparable from intellectual intercourse, for those boisterous and licentious amusements in which even the highest persons had hitherto indulged. With a view to disseminate these refinements through the country, she exerted her influence to render the arts of music and dancing a part of the education of the youth of both sexes.

There is no doubt that the reign of this princess would have been productive of permanent blessings, had she not unfortunately placed unreserved confidence in a favourite, who, rising from an humble station in society to the first place in the councils of his sovereign, at last aspired to the illicit possession of her affections. John Ernest Biren, the son of a gamekeeper in Courland, happening to attract the attention of the duchess, was appointed her private secretary. From this post he was elevated to the more important office of chamberlain; and even then it was rumoured that he stood higher in her grace's favour than was consistent with the position which he nominally occupied. When the council

elected his mistress to the imperial throne, it was stipulated that Biren should not be suffered to accompany her into Russia; and one of the conditions of the capitulation restricted her from marrying, or choosing an heir, without the consent of the council and senate. The empress, accepting the sovereignty under these limitations, left Biren at Mittau, when she came to St. Petersburg: but she had no sooner abrogated the stipulations within which her power was restrained, than Biren appeared at court, was created a Russian count, appointed first lord of the bedchamber, and raised at once to the same eminence which he had occupied before. Some years previously he had succeeded in prevailing on the nobility of Courland to confer upon him the title of duke; and when the Kettler family became extinct by the death of the duke of Courland, he procured that dignity from the hands of the electors for himself and his heirs in perpetuity. Thus glittering with honours, which at best were but surreptitiously obtained, he took upon himself at once in St. Petersburg, the character of one who wielded an absolute authority. He was careful, however, not to offend Ostermann or Munich, because, possessing no abilities for government himself, he was obliged to rely upon them as the instruments of his power. It was supposed that the Turkish war was undertaken at the instigation of this daring man, for the purpose of keeping Munich at a distance from the capital; that officer having attained in a high degree the confidence of the empress. By the most adroit measures, Biren contrived to remove from a familiar intercourse at court every body who might be likely to interfere with his ambitious designs. Apprehensive that the empress, freed from the control of the council, might entertain thoughts of marriage, he assiduously limited all opportunities that could lead to such a result; and even attempted to prevent an union between the princess Anne and Ulric duke of Brunswick, the object of which was in reference to the succession. In this scheme, however, the machinations of Biren were defeated, and the marriage was cele-

brated in the month of July, 1739. This event seriously interfered with the projects of the favourite; but his ingenuity was not exerted in vain in the attempt to derive profit from circumstances which at first seemed so discouraging. In the August following, the duchess of Brunswick became the mother of a prince, who was immediately taken by the empress under her own guardianship, and nominated to be her successor. This proceeding, apparently founded upon some show of justice, was in reality the result of a deep-laid conspiracy. The empress was in a declining state of health, and it was felt that she could not long continue to exercise the sovereignty. In this state of things, it became necessary to provide a successor by an authentic act that could not afterwards be called into question. Biren aimed at the concentration of the imperial power in his own hands; but as an open declaration to that effect would have provoked animosities dangerous to his safety, it was arranged that the young prince, then but a few weeks old, should be nominated to the throne, and that Biren should be appointed regent during the minority of Ivan. Ostermann and Munich, relying upon the future gratitude of Biren, favoured this crafty design. Biren coquetted for a time with the dignities which he was solicited to accept; and pretended at last, that, in undertaking the toils of the regency he yielded to the importunities of others at the sacrifice of his own private wishes. The extent of the power thus delegated to him, was specified in the provisions of the will of the empress, which ordained that he should be the administrator of government until the emperor Ivan had attained his seventeenth year; and that, should Ivan die before that time, Biren should continue guardian to Ivan's brethren, born after him, who should succeed him on the throne; but that, should neither Ivan nor any of his brethren survive, then Biren, with the concurrence of the state, should elect and confirm a new emperor as unlimited monarch. This was the dying injunction of the queen. Biren had the reins of government in his hands; there was

nobody bold enough to oppose the power of an individual who exercised an irresponsible jurisdiction over life and death: even the duke and duchess, who expected to be appointed legally, as they were naturally, the guardians of their son, were silent during these proceedings; and Biren ascended at once to a higher pinnacle of greatness than even his wildest dreams of ambition could have contemplated. Assuming at once the style and title of his highness, regent of the Russian empire, and appropriating to himself an enormous income from the royal treasury, he took up his residence in the palace, resolved to maintain by despotism that which he had procured by fraud.

The people, jealous of seeing the administration of the imperial rule confided to the hands of a foreigner,—and one too who, instead of exhibiting a sympathy in their interests, treated them with the most flagrant tyranny,—betrayed universal discontent at the new order of things. It was held to be a direct act of injustice to debar the duke of Brunswick from the guardianship of his son; and a formidable party now rapidly sprung up, prepared to espouse the rights of that prince. The popular disaffection increased on all sides; but Biren had established his spies in every direction, and was unsparing in the punishments which he inflicted upon all those persons whom he had reason to believe inimical to his government. The streets groaned with the cries of the victims of the knout; the people fled before him, or, in an agony of fear, prostrated themselves upon the earth as he advanced; and the dungeons were filled with the unhappy objects of his suspicions. It was calculated that, throughout the period of his authority, including the reign of the empress Anna, no less than 20,000 persons were exiled to Siberia.

At length the smothered flame broke out, and the demands in favour of duke Ulric took an affirmative shape. Count Munich, disappointed in his expectations by the hypocritical Biren, warmly embarked on the other side; and, by still affecting to be the friend

of the regent, he was enabled to render essential service in the revolution which was now swiftly encircling the walls of the palace. The confidence which the military placed in Munich, gave increased importance to his services; and, as he found that he had nothing to expect from the regent, he attached himself zealously to duke Ulric, in the anticipation that he would ultimately be rewarded with the chief command of the army, which was the station he had long eagerly desired to obtain. The revolution which was thus organised, was promptly accomplished. The regent was arrested in the middle of the night, in his house, by a detachment of the guards; and the principal senators assembled in the palace before daybreak, and acknowledged the princess Anne as grand-duchess of Russia, and guardian of her son the infant emperor. This proceeding was the work of a few hours. Biren was at first confined in the castle of Schlusselbourg, from whence he was removed as a prisoner, and brought to trial for obtaining the regency by improper means — for squandering the imperial treasures — for treating with contumely the parents of the emperor — and for violating the statutes and ordinances, so as to throw the empire into confusion. For these capital offences he was condemned to death; but his sentence was mitigated to perpetual banishment to the deserts of Siberia, where, in addition to the ordinary miseries of that forlorn region, he was compelled to associate in the labours of the numerous wretches whom he had himself condemned to the same fate.

The regency of the princess Anne was slightly perplexed at its opening, by the importunate demands of Munich to be placed at the head of the army — a post which duke Ulric appropriated to himself, and peremptorily refused to relinquish. As a compensation, however, to Munich, he removed Ostermann, and appointed his rival in his place as first minister of the government. Munich did not long hold this office: failing to accomplish a course of policy which he urged

upon the regent, he tendered his resignation, which was unexpectedly accepted. Frustrated in his hopes, he lingered in St. Peterburg, anticipating that he would be recalled; but the period of his utility was past, and his anticipations were disappointed. The ground of his retirement involved a serious change in the foreign policy of the empire. Frederic II. had just ascended the throne of Prussia, and, regarding with jealousy the alliance that had been formed between the courts of St. Petersburg and Vienna, endeavoured to accomplish a union with Russia through the regency of Munich, whose antipathy to Austria was notorious. Frederic did not find it very difficult to work upon the vanity and prejudices of the minister, who was easily brought to prevail upon the regent to enter into a defensive treaty with the cabinet of Berlin; both parties mutually binding themselves to furnish assistance, as occasion might require, to the extent of 12,000 men. In consenting to this treaty, the regent mentally resolved to fulfil the stipulation it enjoined, only so long as Prussia should be at peace with Austria. An occasion soon offered, which obliged her to act upon this secret resolution; Frederic having signified his intention to take possession of Silesia as a part of the inheritance of Maria Theresa. In consequence of this proceeding, a new alliance was formed with Austria at the commencement of the year 1741, by which a fresh engagement to furnish auxiliaries was entered into. Munich in vain remonstrated against this measure; and at last, finding his influence at an end, he solicited permission to resign, which was granted to him at once. Notwithstanding the disposition thus manifested on the part of Russia, she did not take any part in the war between Prussia and Austria; particularly as the king of Poland and the elector of Saxony, who also raised pretensions to the patrimony of Theresa, protested against the progress of the Russian troops through Poland; Sweden at the same time threatening the empire on the borders of Finland.

The Swedes had long looked anxiously for an excuse to make war against Russia; and now that the government of that empire was, to a certain degree, unpopular, and likely from that circumstance to undergo an alteration, a favourable opportunity appeared to present itself for executing a project so gratifying to the whole nation. The ambassador of France at the court of Stockholm encouraged the council to prosecute this war; while the French minister at St. Petersburg demonstrated its facility, by representing in strong colours the weakness and instability of the new administration. The Swedes, flattered by the hopes in which they were led to indulge, already calculated with certainty upon the results of the campaign; and the diet at Stockholm were so sanguine of success, that they actually drew up no less than three sets of articles containing the conditions which they intended to dictate at the conclusion of the war, when they were assured Russia would be compelled to submit to any terms they might propose. By these articles, they made provision for the resumption of all the provinces that had been ceded to Russia by the treaty of Neustadt; and prepared arrangements, in the event of these not being quite so successful as they expected, by which certain terms, less humiliating, but exceedingly extravagant, were to be forced upon their adversary. It was decided, at all events, that, in any case, Russia should surrender Karelia, Ingria, and Livonia; that she should not be permitted to keep a single ship on the Livonian or Esthonian coasts; and that she should be compelled to grant the free exportation of corn. These plans of aggrandisement were deliberately settled by the diet, before any preparations were made for their execution. The Swedes were zealous enough in their desire to wrest from Russia her conquered territories; but they were lamentably deficient in the means by which that desire was to be accomplished. Their fleet was not seaworthy; and the army, brave to a proverb, was insufficiently furnished with provisions, and so destitute of

skilful commanders, that if it had achieved a victory, it must have been by some miracle of good fortune, and not by its own prowess. The generals Levenhaupt and Buddembrock were the most strenuous advocates for the war; yet, although its conduct was committed to their own hands, the sequel proved that the enterprise was as rashly conceived as it was badly conducted.

Russia was the first in the field; and general Lascy, advancing on the Swedes in August, 1741, before they had time to organise their forces, obtained a signal victory over them near Vilmannstrand. This fortress immediately surrendered to the Russians; but the Swedes collected in such superior numbers, that no further progress was made by Lascy throughout the rest of the campaign.

When Sweden entered upon this ill-advised war, she acted under a conviction that serious discontents prevailed in Russia against the regency of the duchess of Brunswick. The sudden changes, succeeding each other with marvellous rapidity, that had taken place in the imperial government, justified, in some measure, the supposition that the present regency was as much exposed to revolution as the preceding administrations. The question of the succession had been treated so vaguely, and had been subjected to such fluctuating decisions, that it was believed some new theory would be set up to annul the last election, as others had been annulled before. There was no doubt that the division of parties in Russia afforded a reasonable ground for anticipating a convulsion. The supreme power had latterly become the prize for which base and ambitious men, without hereditary pretensions, and destitute of personal merit, had struggled with various degrees of success. There was evidently no settled principle of inheritance; and even the dangerous principle sanctioned by the example of Peter the Great, which gave to one unlimited sovereign the right of choosing another to succeed him, was acted upon capriciously, and appealed to or over-ruled as it happened to suit the exigency of

the occasion. The brief reigns of Catharine, of Peter, and of Anna, remarkable as they were for the confusion to which they led in the attempts to settle the crown, for the vicissitudes which they drew down upon persons who had previously enjoyed uninterrupted prosperity, and for the factious views which they extracted and condensed into conspiracies, might be referred to as furnishing the probabilities of the future, and confirming the hopes of those who desired, above all things, to see Russia once more broken up by civil commotions. The antipathy which existed against foreigners, and the objections of the old aristocracy to those European reforms that had been from time to time forced upon the people, were well known to the courts of Stockholm and Paris. The vulnerable point in the domestic concerns of the empire was laid bare; and Sweden, who anticipated a revolution from some cause or other, without being able to predicate from what precise ground of discontent it would spring, resolved, at all events, to expose to the Russians the permanent evil of their condition, leaving it to work its effects as it might. With this view she issued a manifesto, containing the following artful reasons, which were designed to draw with her the sympathies of the Russian population. "The sole intention on the part of Sweden," observed the manifesto, "is to defend herself by arms against the oppressions exercised against her by the arrogant foreigners, the ministers of the Russian court; and at the same time to deliver the Russian nation from the yoke which these ministers have imposed on it, by assisting the Russians to regain their right of electing for themselves a lawful ruler." The foreigners particularly pointed at in this manifesto were Munich and Ostermann. The allusion, towards the close, of the design of Sweden to deliver Russia from the yoke of those ministers, and to assist her in her right of electing a lawful ruler, touched upon topics which were well calculated to disturb the minds of the people, and to suggest to them notions of independence

which they had been hitherto prevented by coercive institutions from entertaining. But there was either a stolid apathy on the part of the Russians, an indifference to, or ignorance of, the nature of liberty; or a national jealousy at the interference of other countries in their affairs, which rendered this ingenious and inflammatory document perfectly harmless. It was disseminated and forgotten; but, although Sweden could not create a revolution in Russia, there were elements of discord within, which rendered revolution inevitable.

The assertion of the right of the sovereign to nominate his successor was productive of inconvenience in a variety of ways. First, as it constantly brought the new monarch into collision with the authorities, who were thus deprived of the privilege of election; second, as it was almost certain to dissatisfy some party, and to produce continual feuds; third, as it led to dissentions, and attempts to vindicate the ancient principle, whenever the sovereign, as we have seen, happened to die intestate; and fourth, as it was calculated to perpetuate in particular families the inheritance of the patronage and the power of government. But the chief danger arose from the fatal precedent of its interruption, which was seized upon with avidity as a justification, on all future changes, of those revolutions which so frequently originated within the walls of the palace. Alterations had now followed each other so quickly in the persons to whom the administration of the government was committed, and they were conceived so rapidly, and executed with such suddenness and decision, that it was no longer surprising to find the imperial authority vested in the morning in different hands from those which exercised it the night before. These bold transactions were, of course, founded upon some plausible pretext, — the unpopularity of the late ruler, the more authentic claims of the new, the support of the army, or, perhaps, the rare argument of the national will, which it would be mockery to designate public opinion. The overthrow of Biren was effected by a combination of circumstances: the hatred in which he

was universally held, his cruelty and rapacity, the obscurity of his origin, and the fact that he was an alien by birth. But the last of these objections lay with almost equal force against the young emperor Ivan; and might be employed with still greater truth against his father the duke of Brunswick, who, as husband of the regent, exercised considerable influence at court. A stronger motive than this was not required to inflame the prejudices of a powerful section of the nobility, and to yield a satisfactory apology for removing the regent and her son, who was not considered a true Russian, from power. The project was not slow in arriving at maturity; and the term of authority permitted to the guardian of Ivan was, all circumstances considered, of little more duration than that extended to Biren, who held his perilous elevation only two and twenty days.

These designs against the throne were greatly facilitated by the strange conduct of the princess Anne and her husband. Since they had attained their wishes in the government, their behaviour towards each other had undergone a most remarkable change. Harmony and confidence seemed to have ceased between them; and, no longer acting in concert, but, on the contrary, opposing each other by conflicting views, the affairs of the state unavoidably fell into perplexity and confusion. The rivalry that had been produced between Ostermnn and Munich in consequence of the favour shown, in the first instance, by the duke to the latter, contributed to increase that disagreement in action which was imperceptibly dividing the government into two parties. Ostermann, finding himself displaced to make way for Munich, attached himself still more closely to the duke, for the purpose of supplanting his rival upon the first opportunity; while Munich, on the other hand, smarting under the mortification he endured by the duke's repeated refusal of the office he solicited, sought to ingratiate himself in the good opinion of the regent. The consequence of this spirit of opposition, fed by the jealousies of those able ministers, was the daily counter-

action by one party of the measures projected by the other. The regent was a woman of serene temper and lenient disposition; she regarded severity with aversion, and always resorted to the prerogative of mercy where it was possible she could do so consistently with justice: but her desires were so completely thwarted by Ostermann, that the public results of the administration bore a very different character from that by which they would have been distinguished had her own opinions been allowed their proper weight. Perhaps it was to this undercurrent of resistance that the indifference concerning the government into which he fell ought to be attributed. But, to whatever cause it might be referred, she gradually neglected the duties of her station, and suffered them to be discharged at hazard by the advisers of the duke. Totally estranging herself from her husband, she retired for weeks together from public affairs, and shut herself up with a countess Mengden, who obtained so great an ascendency over her mind as to withdraw her attention almost wholly from the responsibility of her position. This circumstance produced considerable dissatisfaction, and heightened the antipathy with which the people regarded the German party that was now growing up at court. The aversion entertained towards foreigners now broke out with more violence than ever. It seemed as if the administration of affairs had completely passed out of the hands of the Russians. The convention that had been formed on the demise of Peter II., by which the supreme authority was vested in the council, which was composed almost exclusively of members of native families, would have had indirectly the effect of excluding strangers from the government; but the evils with which it was pregnant, and its immediate interference with the privileges of the empress, led to its abrogation. The ascendency of foreigners was then resumed with greater force than ever. Biren the insolent guardian, Ostermann the experienced politician, and Munich the able commander, rose to the summit and swayed the destinies of the empire. Nor did Ivan

himself possess a much better claim to be considered as a Russian. He was but a remote descendant of the house of Romanoff; his father was a German prince, his mother the daughter of a German prince; and the only member of the imperial house to whom he could refer his lineal descent, was his grandfather Ivan, step-brother to Peter I. The family, therefore, that occupied the throne, was almost exclusively of German blood, which was rendered still more repugnant to the people by the fact, that all the most important offices under government were filled by foreigners. There was in these circumstances, and in the desire to arrest finally the influence of strangers — which appeared to progress with increasing certainty in each successive reign — a sufficient ground for protest; and the extraordinary indolence of the regent, her utter neglect of state affairs, her discouragement of Russian customs, and her lavish patronage of her immediate adherents, who were all obnoxious to the people, furnished the ready pretext upon which a plot was formed to expel her from the throne.

The princess Elizabeth, daughter of Peter I., residing at St. Petersburg, was the person in favour of whose claims this conspiracy was got up. By birth, she was closer to the throne than either the young emperor or the regent; and the habits of her life were much more congenial to the feelings of the country. She might have preferred her pretensions on the death of Peter II., when there was a strong probability that they would have commanded the suffrages of the council; but at that time she expressed no desire to enter upon the cares of sovereignty, choosing rather to cultivate the repose of a retired and tranquil life. Throughout the reign of the empress Anna, she observed the same quiet course, keeping aloof from politics, and avoiding, as much as possible, all intercourse with the great men or distinguished families at court. Her conduct was so entirely free from suspicion, that she enjoyed the closest intimacy with the empress, who,

believing that the princess was averse to the toils of power, bestowed her full confidence upon her; and even Biren, who distrusted almost every one about him, never contemplated any measure to her prejudice. She enjoyed the immunities of a private person; never made any display of her rank in public; and was, in truth, as she was in appearance, without a party in the country. The only exception to the privacy of her life was the attachment she showed for the soldiery, particularly the guards; which she did not hesitate to exhibit by frequently standing sponsor for their children. Yet, although her conduct was so exempt from reproach, the Dolgoruky were accused of an intention of placing her upon the throne: an intention which they might have entertained without her knowledge or sanction; for there was sometimes as much violence committed in forcing the dignity upon unwilling shoulders, as in deposing the possessor. That aspiring family fell under the displeasure of Biren, and its members were put to the torture towards the close of the year 1739; when they confessed that they had planned an insurrection, the purpose of which was to carry off the empress, the princess Anne and her husband, to expel the Germans from Russia, to proclaim Elizabeth empress, and to bring about a marriage between her and one of the Nariskins. This confession might be true, or it might have been wrung from the accused by torture, which, in those times, was too often persuasively employed to make its victims confess more than the truth; but it was satisfactory for the ends of Biren, who, proceeding to capital punishment at once, broke one of the victims on the wheel, decapitated three others, and sentenced two more to a dungeon for life.

There is no reason to believe that Elizabeth contemplated any designs upon the throne during the reign of the empress Anna, or that the simplicity of her general conduct was assumed as a disguise for secret intrigues. The project seems to have occurred to her for the first time, when she saw an infant emperor consigned to the

regency of a foreigner; it was probably strengthened afterwards, when the guardianship of the child was transferred to its parents, one of whom was a German by birth, and the other by descent; and it reached its maturity, when she heard it reported currently that the regent intended to have herself declared empress on her birthday in the following December, 1741, and to establish the succession in the line of her daughters. This intelligence, which every day obtained fresh credit at court, imparted a new aspect to the question. It was no longer to be considered as a choice between lineal and indirect descendants of the house of Romanof, but between a sovereign who should be chosen by the electors, and one who was resolved to usurp by force what she could not legitimately obtain. The discontent of the people, the inconsistent bearing of the regent, and the favourable disposition for a change which began to be developed in influential quarters, seemed to sanction the act of revolution, and to invoke Elizabeth from her retirement to fulfil its ends. Personally, she stood alone; she had never drawn around her any powerful friends; she had never mixed in the court feuds; and her whole reliance was upon the temper and accidents of the time. But it was not forgotten in her calculations, that the individual who is the representative of a principle, acquires at once all the power which the cause he espouses can confer, and that he is sure to be sustained by a party for the promotion of their own objects, although he might be destitute of support in the attempt to advance his own.

Lestocq, the physician and favourite of the princess, was the main-spring of the plot. It was by his advice that the enterprise was undertaken, and it was almost solely by his perseverance that it was prosecuted. He first addressed himself to the guards, who were individually devoted to the princess. The earliest confidants of his schemes were Grunstein, a broken merchant, who was then a corporal in the preobrajenski guards, and Schwartz, a trumpeter. Through the

agency of these persons, to whom he promised large rewards, Lestocq succeeded in gaining over to his views a strong party of the soldiery. M. de la Chetardie, the French ambassador resident at St. Petersburg, readily engaged in the conspiracy, acting, no doubt, under the sanction of his court, whose policy it was to convulse the Russian government by any means in its power, in the hope of ultimately effecting a disunion between that cabinet and the Austrian emperor. From that minister, Lestocq procured the sums of money that were necessary to carry forward his plans, which now proceeded with rapidity. But Elizabeth, who had entered into the project with reluctance, regarded its progress with fear, and was as anxious to postpone the catastrophe as Lestocq was eager for its accomplishment. This produced delays which were nearly fatal. The soldiers, intrusted with a secret of too much magnitude for persons in their condition, could not long preserve the confidence that was reposed in them; and, at last, the design began to be rumoured abroad. It even reached the ears of the regent, who, possessed by some unaccountable infatuation, treated it with the utmost carelessness. She either did not believe in its truth, or lulled herself into security by depending upon the fidelity of her friends. Unmoved by the danger that threatened her, she concealed from her husband the information she had received; for which, when it was too late to retrace her steps, he afterwards severely censured her. Ostermann, who was early made aware of the proceedings of the conspirators, warned the regent of her danger, and intreated her to take some decisive measures to avert it: and the British ambassador, detecting, probably, the insidious hand of France, predicted her destruction in vain. Her facile nature still lingered inactive, until at last she received an anonymous letter, in which she was strongly admonished of the perils by which she was surrounded. A more energetic mind would have acted unhesitatingly upon these repeated proofs of the approaching insur-

rection; but Anne, still clinging to the side of mercy, instead of seizing upon the ringleaders, who were known to her, and quieting at once the apprehensions of her advisers, read the whole contents of the letter in open court in the presence of Elizabeth, and stated the nature of the reports that had reached her. Elizabeth, of course, protested her ignorance of the whole business, burst into a flood of tears, and asserted her innocence with such a show of sincerity, that the regent was perfectly satisfied, and took no further notice of the matter. This occurred on the 4th of December, 1741. Lestocq had previously appointed the day of the consecration of the waters, the 6th of January, 1742, for Elizabeth to make her public appearance at the head of the guards, to issue declarations setting forth her claims upon the throne, and to cause herself to be proclaimed. But the proceeding that had taken place in the court determined him to hasten his plans. Now that the vigilance of the court was awakened, he knew that his motions would be watched, and that the affair did not admit of any further delay. He applied himself, accordingly, with redoubled vigilance, to the business of collecting and organizing the partisans of the princess; continued to bribe them with French gold; and, when every thing was prepared, he again urged upon his mistress the urgent necessity of decision. He pointed out to her that the guards, upon whose assistance she chiefly relied, were under orders to march for Sweden, and that in a short time all would be lost. She was still, however, timid and doubtful of the result, when the artful Lestocq drew a card from his pocket, which represented her on one side in the habit of a nun, and on the other with a crown upon her head — asking her which fate she preferred; adding, that the choice depended upon herself, and upon the promptitude with which she employed the passing moment. This argument succeeded; she consented to place herself in his hands; and, remembering the success that had attended the midnight revolution that consigned Biren to banish-

ment, he appointed the following night, the 5th of December, for the execution of his plan,—undertaking the principal part himself, in the hope of the honours that were to be heaped upon him in the event of success. When the hour arrived, Elizabeth again betrayed irresolution, but Lestocq overcame her fears; and after having made a solemn vow before the crucifix, that no blood should be shed in the attempt, she put on the order of St. Catherine, and placing herself in a sledge, attended by Lestocq and her chamberlain, she drove to the barracks of the preobrajenski guards. When she arrived at this point, she advanced towards the soldiers on foot, holding the cross in her hand; and, addressing them in a speech of some length, justified the grounds on which she advanced her claims to the throne: reminded them that she was the daughter of Peter the Great; that she had been illegally deprived of the succession; that a foreign child wielded the imperial sceptre; and that foreigners were advanced, to the exclusion of native Russians, to the highest offices in the state. A considerable number of the guards had been previously prepared for this proceeding by bribes and promises, and inflammatory liquors were distributed amongst them to heighten their zeal. With the exception of a few, who would not violate their duty, and who were, in consequence, manacled by the remainder, the whole body responded to the address with enthusiasm. They now proceeded to the palace of the emperor and his parents, pressing into their train every body they met on the way, to prevent their object from being betrayed; and, forcing the sentries at the gates, obtained easy admittance to the sleeping appartments of the regent and the duke, whom they dragged, unceremoniously, and without affording them time to dress, out of their beds, and conveyed them to the palace of Elizabeth, where they confined them under a strong guard. The infant Ivan, unconscious of the misery that awaited him, was enjoying a gentle slumber during this scene of violence: and, when he awoke, he was carried, in a

similar manner, to the place where his unhappy parents were immured. On the same night, the principal persons connected with the government were seized in the same way, and thrown into prison. Amongst them were Lewis Ernest of Brunswick, the brother of the duke, Ostermann, and Munich.

This revolution was as rapid and complete as that which deprived Biren of the regency, and was effected by a similar stealthy proceeding in the silence of the night. Early on the following morning, the inhabitants were called upon to take the oath of fealty to Elizabeth. But they were accustomed to these sudden movements in the palace; and before the day was concluded, the shouts of the intoxicated soldiery announced that the people had confirmed, by the usual attestation of allegiance, the authority of the empress.* A manifesto was immediately issued, which contained the following statement:—"The empress Anna having nominated the grandson of her sister, a child born into the world only a few weeks before the empress's death, as successor to the throne; and during the minority of whom various persons had conducted the administration of the empire in a manner highly iniquitous, whence disturbances had arisen both within the country and out of it, and probably in time still greater might arise; therefore all the faithful subjects of Elizabeth, both in spiritual and temporal stations, *particularly the regiments of the life-guards*, had unanimously invited her, for the prevention of all the mischievous consequences to be apprehended, to take possession of the throne of her father as nearest by right of birth; and that she had accordingly resolved to yield to this universal request of her faithful subjects, by taking possession of her inheritance derived from her parents, the emperor Peter I. and the empress Catherine."

Shortly after this, another manifesto appeared, in

* It is said, that when the infant Ivan heard the shouts of the soldiers in front of the palace, he endeavoured to imitate their vociferations, when Elizabeth exclaimed, "Poor babe! thou knowest not that thou art joining in the noise that is raised at thy undoing."

which Elizabeth grounded her legitimacy on the will of Catharine I. As the statements in this document respecting the right of inheritance are singular in themselves, and as they illustrate in a very remarkable degree the irregularity with which the question of the succession was suffered to be treated, the passage touching upon those points appears to be worthy of preservation. It will be seen, upon reference to previous facts, that these statements are highly coloured to suit the demands of the occasion. After some preliminaries, the manifesto proceeds to observe, "that on the demise of Peter II., whom she (Elizabeth) ought to have succeeded, Anna was elected through the machinations of Ostermann; and afterwards, when the sovereign was attacked by a mortal distemper, the same Ostermann appointed as successor the son of prince Antony Ulric of Brunswick and the princess of Mecklenburg, a child only two months old, *who had not the slightest claim by inheritance to the Russian throne*; and, not content with this, he added, to the prejudice of Elizabeth, that, after Ivan's death, the princes afterwards born of the said prince of Brunswick and the princess of Mecklenburg should succeed to the Russian throne; whereas even the parents themselves had not the slightest right to that throne. That Ivan was, therefore, by the machinations of Ostermann and Munich, confirmed emperor in October, 1740; and because the several regiments of guards, as well as the marching regiments, were under the command of Munich and the father of Ivan, and consequently the whole force of the empire was in the hands of those two persons, the subjects were compelled to take the oath of allegiance to Ivan. That Antony Ulric and his spouse had afterwards broken this ordinance, to which they themselves had sworn, had forcibly seized upon the administration of the empire; and Anne had resolved, even in the life-time of her son Ivan, to place herself upon the throne as empress. That, in order, then, to prevent all dangerous consequences from these proceedings,

Elizabeth had ascended the throne, and of her own imperial grace had ordered *the princess with her son and daughter to set out for their native country*."

Such were the arguments upon which Elizabeth attempted to justify her seizure of the throne. With what sincerity she fulfilled the act of grace towards the regent and her family, expressed in the last sentence, shall be seen hereafter.

CHAP. X.

CHARACTER OF THE REVOLUTION WHICH PLACED ELIZABETH ON THE THRONE. — PUNISHMENTS AND REWARDS. — HER WARS IN GERMANY. — SHE ADOPTS HER NEPHEW, THE DUKE OF HOLSTEIN. — SHE MARRIES HIM TO THE PRINCESS CATHERINE OF ANHALT. — UNPRINCIPLED CHARACTER OF THE GRAND-DUCHESS. — INTRIGUES. — DEATH OF ELIZABETH. — PETER III. — HIS IMPRUDENCE. — HIS REFORMS. — HIS MISCHIEVOUS ACTS. — INTRIGUES OF THE EMPRESS TO DETHRONE HIM. — CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH PREPARED THE REVOLUTION. — IT EXPLODES. — CATHERINE IS PROCLAIMED, AND PETER MURDERED.

1741. THE revolution which elevated Elizabeth to the throne, and the circumstances which preceded that elevation, were in every respect remarkable. She had no claim to the dignity, either by birth, or by the regulation in regard to the succession introduced by the innovating Peter. Elizabeth was the younger daughter of Peter: Anne, who had been married to the duke of Holstein, was the elder; and though this princess was dead, she left a son, the representative of her rights, who, as we shall hereafter perceive, did ultimately reign as Peter III. The right of primogeniture, indeed, had, in the regulation to which we have alluded, been set aside, and the choice, pure and simple, of the reigning potentate substituted; but the infant Peter had the additional claim of being expressly indicated in the will of Catherine I. These claims, however, had been utterly disregarded when Anne, duchess of Courland, and daughter of Ivan, brother of Peter I., had been raised by a faction to the throne. On the death of this empress without issue, Peter, as we have seen, was again overlooked, through the ambition rather of an individual than of a faction, — the bloodthirsty Biren. Ivan, the son of Anne, had been preferred to his mo-

ther, who had been married to prince Antony Ulric of Brunswick; and no doubt could be entertained that the object of Biren, in prevailing on the empress to nominate the child, was to retain the supreme power in his own hands as regent. We have seen by what means his ruin was effected; what circumstances accompanied the regency of the duchess Anne, mother of the youthful emperor; and how, by a similar revolution, Anne herself was replaced by the princess Elizabeth.

That Ivan had no other right to the throne than 1741. that conferred by the will of the empress Anne, was one of the pretexts which Elizabeth employed to prove the validity of her own title. That will, in the manifesto published three days after the revolution, was insinuated—probably with great truth—to have been irregularly obtained; but in either case it was of no validity, since the right of Elizabeth was asserted to be superior even to that of the former empress. But the instrument was a tissue of sophistry. Though she had been placed on the throne by about 300 soldiers, she did not hesitate to affirm that the revolution had been effected at the demand of *all* her subjects. In ostentatiously displaying her clemency, in proclaiming that she had sent back the parents of Ivan to their own country, with all the honours due to their station, she was equally insincere. Both passed their lives in captivity, and were transferred from one fortress to another, according to her caprice or jealousy. Until his eighth year, Ivan was permitted to remain with them; but, apprehensive lest his mind should be taught ambition, he was consigned to solitary confinement in the fortress, first of Oranienburg, next of Schlusselburg. In one respect his fate was worse than that of his parents: *they* died in the course of nature*; *he*, as we shall hereafter perceive, perished by violence.

* The mother died in childbed, 1746; the father survived until 1780. Women will bear suffering more patiently than men: *he* cursed his lot; *she* tried only to console him.

1741. One of Elizabeth's first cares was to punish the men who had, during the former reigns, kept her from the throne,—those especially who had assisted the regent Anne in overturning the power of Biren, and had instigated her afterwards to seize the throne. All were condemned to death; but the new empress was not a woman of blood, and the sentence was commuted into perpetual banishment. Osterman, Munich, Golovkin, Mengden, Loevenwold, driven from a power scarcely less than supreme, and from riches almost inexhaustible, were forced to earn their own subsistence in the wilds of Siberia. Munich opened a school: the hand which had conquered the Turks, which had given a king to Poland, was employed in tracing mathematical figures for children. What redounds to his everlasting honour is, that he bore his misfortunes with the equanimity of a sage: he was a moral no less than a military hero. His example was imitated by two of his contemporaries; the rest yielded to a pusillanimous despair.

1741 to 1742. If Elizabeth could punish, she could also reward. The surgeon, Lestocq, was made head physician of the court, president of the college of the faculty, and privy councillor, with a magnificent income. The company of grenadiers who had raised her to the throne were all declared noble; and the common soldiers ranked in future as lieutenants. But under a despotic government there is little security for the great, least of all for those whom capricious favour has exalted. Presuming on his services, the ambition of Lestocq urged him to demand higher preferment, and he had the mortification to be refused. Nor was this all: by his arrogance he offended the most powerful favourites of Elizabeth, especially the grand-chancellor Bestuchef, who had been the minister of Anne; and, in seven years after the revolution, he was exiled to a fortress in the government of Archangel. Exile, in short, was perpetual in this reign. The empress vowed that no culprit should suffer death; but death would often have been preferable to the

punishments which were inflicted. Torture, the knout, slitting of the tongue, and other chastisements,—so cruel that the sufferer frequently died in consequence,—were not spared even females. Soon after her accession a conspiracy was discovered, the object of which was the restoration of young Ivan: the conspirators, who were encouraged by a foreign minister, were seized, severely chastised, and sent into exile. Among them was a court beauty, whose charms had long given umbrage to the czarina, and we may easily conceive that the revenge was doubly sweet which could at once destroy the rebel and the rival. But the number of these victims was small, compared with that which was consigned to unknown dungeons, and doomed to pass the rest of life in hopeless despondency. With all her humanity, Elizabeth suffered that most inquisitorial court, the secret chancery, to subsist; and the denunciations which were laid before it were received as implicitly as the clearest evidence in other tribunals.

In her foreign policy this empress seems scarcely to 1741
have had an object. Averse to business, and fond of to
pleasure, she allowed her ministers, especially Bestu- 1743.
chef, to direct the operations of the wars in which she was engaged, and to conduct at will the diplomacy of the empire. Her first enemy was Sweden. That prince demanded the restitution of Finland, and was refused; hostilities which, indeed, had commenced at the instigation of France during the last reign, were resumed; but they were prosecuted with little vigour by the Swedes. The valour of the nation appeared to have died with their hero, Charles XII. So unfortunate were their arms that, by the treaty of Nylstadt, in 1721, and that of Abo, in 1743, Livonia, Esthonia, Carelia, Ingria, Wyberg, and Kexholm passed under the domination of Russia. Still worse than the loss of their possessions was the influence thenceforward exercised over the court of Stockholm by that of St. Petersburg. Since that period, indeed, Sweden has been little more than a province of Russia. In vain did the

former endeavour to moderate the exactions of the empress, by electing the duke of Holstein, her nephew, successor to the throne of the Goths: the treaty of Abo was not the less severe. It is, indeed, true that the intelligence of this election did not reach St. Petersburg until Elizabeth herself, who was resolved never to marry *, had already nominated duke Peter as her own successor; but she ought to have received in a better spirit a step designed as an act of homage to herself.

1756 to 1761. Had Elizabeth known her own interests, she would never have engaged in the celebrated war which during so many years shook all Europe to its centre. But, in the first place, she affected much commiseration for the Polish king, whose Saxon dominions were invaded by the Prussians, and whom she called her ally. In the second, she was evidently actuated by a personal antipathy to Frederic, and whoever were his enemies were sure to be her allies. It would, however, be wrong to suppose that personal feeling alone was her sole motive for interfering in a foreign war. There can be no doubt that even at this early period, and, indeed, long before this period, the ministers of Russia had cast a longing eye on the possessions of Poland. Courland and Semigallia, though nominally dependent on the Polish crown, were in reality provinces of Russia. They had been lost to Poland through the marriage of Anne, niece of Peter I., to Kettler, sovereign of the duchy. Though she had no issue; though Ferdinand, the successor of Kettler, was equally childless; though the Polish diet contended, with justice, that the fief was reversible to the republic, Anne was resolved that its future destiny should be changed. Under the pretext of certain pecuniary claims, the Russian troops overran the territory; and the states were compelled to elect Biren, the parent of the empress, to the vacant dignity. After the fall of that unprincipled adventurer, the states,

* She is said to have been privately married to a singer; but this is doubtful. What is certain is, that her lovers were as numerous after as before the alleged union.

disgusted with Russian preponderance, had ventured to unite their suffrages in favour of Charles, son of Frederic Augustus III. king of Poland; but Frederic durst not sanction the election until he had obtained the permission of the empress Elizabeth. She could, for once, well afford to be generous; and duke Charles was suffered to take possession of the dignity. And, while on this subject, we may so far anticipate events as to add that Peter III., successor of Elizabeth, refused to admit the rights of Charles, whom he expelled from the duchy; and that Catherine II. incorporated it with her dominions. That Elizabeth herself had the ambitious views of her father, in reference not only to Courland, but to other provinces, is certain; and, as we have already observed, one of her motives for engaging in the great European contest was the prospect of ulterior advantages. The pretext of succouring an ally was sufficient to justify, in the eyes of Europe, the march of her armies. In this respect, her policy was Machiavelian enough. But to her the war was an imprudent one: whatever her views, the time was not yet arrived when they could be fully executed. Nor were the events always honourable to the military glory of the empire. The reason is generally and, perhaps, justly assigned to the partiality of the grand duke Peter, the heir presumptive, for the Prussian monarch, — a partiality so great as to be inexplicable. The Russian generals, however anxious to win the favour of their sovereign, still more the honours of successful warfare, were yet loth to incur the dislike of Peter: hence the operations were indecisive; and success, when gained, was not pursued. But other causes were at work. Thus, when, in 1757, Apraxin, field marshal of the Russian forces, invaded Prussia, took Memel, and, near Jagersdorf, obtained a brilliant victory over the troops of Frederic, yet, as if defeated, instantly fell back upon Courland, the cause was something more than the fear of offending Peter. This retrograde

movement surprising, as well it might, both the empress and her people, Apraxin was placed under arrest, and the command of the army bestowed on another general. He was tried for the crime, but absolved, — a result still more surprising to men who regarded merely the surface of things. The reason was, that the grand-chancellor, Bestuchef, had secretly ordered the marshal to retreat, and was, of course, his protector in the trial: yet this order did not, as is generally supposed, emanate from any understanding with the grand duke, much less from any fear of his vengeance. In fact, he was ignorant that such an order had been expedited. He was the well-known enemy of the chancellor; and the conduct of the latter in this, as in many other cases, originated in a policy which, as it is still misconceived in England, shall now be divested of the veil that has so long covered it.

1742 Charles Peter Ulric, duke of Holstein Gottorp, whom
to Elizabeth had nominated her successor, who had em-
1750. braced the Greek religion, and who, at his baptism, had received the name of Peter Fedorovitch, had arrived at St. Petersburg immediately after her accession: he was then in his fourteenth year. The education of this unfortunate prince was neglected; and the cause must be attributed alike to his own aversion from study, and to the indifference of the empress. Military exercises were the only occupation for which he had any relish, and in them he was indulged. At the palace of Oranienbaum, with which his aunt had presented him, he passed the months of his absence from court,—a period of freedom for which he always sighed. As his recollections were German, so also were his affections. He had little respect for those over whom he was one day to reign: instead of native, he surrounded himself with young German officers. His addiction to such exercises became a passion, and was doubtless one of the causes that so strongly indisposed him to more serious and more important pursuits. But it was not the only cause. In his native province he had probably learned to admire

another propensity, common enough in his time,—that to hard drinking; and it was not likely to be much impaired in such a country as Russia. His potations, which were frequent and long, were encouraged by his companions; and, in a few years, he became a complete bacchanalian. If we add, that both he and they indulged in gratifications still more criminal—in licentious amours,—we shall not hesitate to believe the charge of profligacy with which he has been assailed. Whether the empress was for some time privy to his excesses, has been disputed; but probability affirms that she was, and that, by conniving at these ignoble pursuits, her policy was to keep him at a distance from the affairs of state. In this base purpose she was, from motives sufficiently obvious, zealously assisted by her ministers, especially by Bestuchef. Profligate as was the grand-duke, he was displeased with this state of restraint; and he sometimes complained of it with a bitterness that was sure to be exaggerated by the spies whom they had placed near him. The empress paid little attention to the reports concerning him: her purpose was to disqualify him for governing; to render him too contemptible to be dreaded: nor was she much offended with his murmurs. That purpose was gained; for Peter had the reputation of being at once ignorant, vicious, and contemptible. In a country so fertile in revolutions, where unprincipled adventurers were ever ready to encourage the discontent of any one likely to disturb the existing order of things, this reputation was one of the surest safeguards of Elizabeth's throne. She no longer feared that he would be made the tool of the designing, and she secretly exulted in the success of a policy which Machiavel himself must have admired. Nor did she prove herself unworthy of that great master in the refined hypocrisy which made her represent her nephew as a prince of hopeful talents. But even she blushed at some of his irregularities; and, in the view of justifying himself, had furnished him with a wife. Her

choice was unfortunate; it was Sophia Augusta, daughter of the prince of Anhalt Zerbst, who, on her conversion to the Greek faith, — a necessary preliminary to her marriage,— had received the baptismal name of *Catherine.*

1744 to 1752. This union was entitled to the more attention, as in its consequences it powerfully affected, not only the whole of Russia, but the whole of Europe.* Shortly before its completion, Peter was seized with the small-pox, which left hideous traces on his countenance. The sight of him is said so far to have affected Catherine, that she fainted away. But though she was only in her sixteenth year, ambition had already over her more influence than the tender passion, and she smothered her repugnance. Unfortunately, the personal qualities of the husband were not of a kind to remove the ill impression: if he bore her any affection, which appears doubtful, his manners were rude, even vulgar; and she blushed for him whenever they met in general society. What was still worse, she soon learned to despise his understanding; and it required little penetration to foresee that, whatever might be his title after Elizabeth's death, the power must rest with Catherine. Hence the courtiers in general were more assiduous in their attentions to her than to him,—a circumstance which did not much dispose him for the better. Finding no charms in his new domestic circle, he naturally turned to his boon companions; his orgies became frequent; and Catherine was completely neglected. Hence her indifference was exchanged into absolute dislike. The contrast between their characters exhibited itself in their conduct. While *he* was thus earning contempt for himself, *she* was assiduously strengthening her party. She had the advantage — we should rather say the curse — of being directed by a wily mother, who had accompanied her into Russia, and whose political intrigues were so notorious, that at length she was ordered by the empress

* Celebrated September 1st, 1744.

to return into Germany. The grand-duchess, however, had been too well tutored to suffer much by her mother's departure; and she prosecuted her purpose with an ardour that would have done honour to a better cause.

So long as the German princess remained at court, 1750 to 1754.
the conduct of Catherine was outwardly decorous: but now, less restraint was observable in her behaviour. Without moral principles; little deterred by the fear of worldly censure, in a court where the empress herself was any thing but a model of chastity; and burning with hatred towards her husband, — she soon dishonoured his bed. Whether, as some writers have said, her vicious tendency in this respect was apparent before she left Germany, is exceedingly doubtful. It is equally doubtful that she secretly and unknown mixed in certain licentious scenes, for which the Russian courtiers have always been so infamous. Soltikoff, the first of her *known* lovers, was probably also the first she ever had. He was the chamberlain, the boon companion of Peter; and as he was always attendant on the grand-duke, he had no difficulty in perceiving both the unfavourable terms on which the imperial couple lived, and the worthlessness of Catherine's character. One so humble in station, in fortune, in family connections, would scarcely have made the first advances: he had, however, the art of rendering himself necessary to a dissipated woman, — to one, especially, who hated the solitude of Oranienbaum. The result may be easily conceived; the dishonour of Peter was soon known; and it reached the ears of Elizabeth, who, though sufficiently indifferent to female reputation, was offended with the insult done to her family. Her first impression was to exile Soltikoff into Siberia; but aware that such a catastrophe would give additional publicity to the intrigue, and influenced by the advice of her wary chancellor, Bestucheff, she covered his disgrace under the veil of an honourable embassy. Paul Petrowitch, born the 1st of October, 1754, — that is,

ten years after the marriage of the grand-duke,—afterwards the unfortunate emperor Paul I., is thought to have been the issue of this connection.

1754 to 1756. Without any sentimental attachment, without any affection of the heart, and led only by the basest tendency, Catherine was not a woman long to bemoan the absence of Soltikoff; and his place was soon supplied by count Stanislas Poniatowski. This was a Polish adventurer, more unprincipled even than the former, who appeared at St. Petersburg in the train of the British ambassador. But as his situation in life was too ignoble to make him appear as the lover of the grand-duchess, she, or Bestucheff for her, contrived to obtain for him the post of ambassador from the king of Poland to the empress of all the Russias. If the chancellor indeed, — and there appears no reason to doubt the fact, — became such an instrument in such a crime, we cannot fail to be horribly impressed with the character of the Russian court. The sensuality of Elizabeth was every day increasing; she threw off every social restraint; and her conduct was successfully imitated by the grand-duchess. Peter himself had now his acknowledged mistress, — a circumstance which afforded pleasure rather than mortification to her and the empress." Thinking that she might now abandon herself with more confidence to her evil courses, she no longer condescended to employ the caution which she had hitherto observed; and by Peter himself she was surprised in an equivocal situation with Poniatowski. The grand-duke was certainly moved: it was one thing to suspect her guilt from public rumour alone; it was another to have derived the knowledge from personal observation. He could not, with any sense, not merely of dignity, but of decency, overlook the exposure. His first care was to lay his complaint before the empress; and when, as might be expected from her character, exhorted to moderation, he vowed that he would so far imitate his grandfather, the first of the name, as to

cudgel the ambassador to death. In alarm, Poniatowski hastily returned into Poland.

The retreat of this worthless minion in no degree abated the crimes of this abandoned princess. That, in concert with several Russian nobles, of whom Bestucheff was the chief, she meditated the exclusion of her husband from the throne, and the elevation of herself as regent during the minority of her son Paul, is a fact which can no longer be disputed. Hence the criminal condescension of the chancellor to the views of Catherine; hence his efforts to prevail on the empress to nominate the infant Paul as her successor. The indiscretion of the grand-duke, who was no favourite with any body; his frequent complaints of the tutelage in which he was held; his bursts of indignation at his exclusion from the councils of the empire, — were carefully related to his aunt, with such exaggerations as were most likely to destroy the last traces of the lingering regard she bore him. All, indeed, who had been the friends of Catherine,—all who had shared in the confidence of the minister, might well contemplate with alarm the succession of one that had vowed revenge against the partisans of both. Besides, the contempt which Peter felt, and which he seldom hesitated to express, for the Russian people, rendered his succession far from agreeable to them. On the other hand, the wily, calculating grand-duchess was anxious, even in the most indifferent points, to conform with the national habits and prejudices. Intrigues more complicated and more criminal were pursued every day; the empress, who during five years preceding her death was often confined to her bed, was more than ever beset by the factious. It was not to please the heir-presumptive of the crown, whose blind adoration of the Russian king was so well known, that Bestucheff dispatched the secret order for Apraxin to retreat: it was that the chiefs of the army, of whom many were his creatures, might be ready to join in effecting the revolution which was meditated. But the ambitious mini-

1756 to 1759.

ster, presuming on the distaste which his imperial mistress generally showed for affairs, and still more on her bodily indisposition, which at this time placed her life in danger, proceeded too rapidly. His intrigues were discovered; his letter to the marshal was produced; he was deprived of all his power; and Peter had the joy of seeing him exiled.

1759 to 1761. The general who succeeded Apraxin obtained advantages over the Russian monarch, which had never been contemplated by his predecessor. But though he took Königsberg, placed most of Prussia under contribution, and defeated the Prussian army in a decisive engagement, he, too, was unwilling to irritate beyond forgiveness the heir of the empire, especially as the reports which daily reached him of Elizabeth's health convinced him that the succession was not far distant. Under the pretext of illness, he demanded leave to retire. His successor, Soltikof (not, we may be sure, the favourite of that name), was still more successful. Frederic was defeated in one of the best contested battles of this famous war; Berlin was taken; and Colberg reduced, after a vigorous siege. The news of this last success reached the empress, but she was no longer capable of deriving satisfaction from it. Much to her honour she withstood all the solicitations of the intriguers who wished to exclude her nephew, and to place Paul on the throne, under the regency of his mother. She died on the 29th day of December, 1761.

The character of this sovereign may be inferred from the preceding relation. Its chief feature was voluptuousness; but we shall not pollute these pages in describing, as so many writers have done, the instances of its display. That she was averse to blood, is evident from her abolition of the capital punishment. And she had some taste for literature. Moscow owes to her the foundation of its university, and St. Petersburg that of its celebrated Academy of the Fine Arts,— both well endowed. Nor was she inattentive to legis-

lation; since she continued the code which her father projected. But she was no less feeble in mind than she was vicious in conduct. Her superstition was equal to her lust; the sight of a person in mourning affected her more than that of a whole street of starving families; and her conscience reproached her more for violating a fast than for outraging the most sacred of moral virtues. While she encouraged a system of espionage destructive of all domestic freedom and happiness; while she punished, with inexcusable rigour, the crime of eating an egg on a day of abstinence; she was in no degree offended with the spread of the most baneful vices.

As Elizabeth, on her death-bed, had confirmed the rights of PETER III.; and as the conspirators, deprived of Bestucheff their guide, were unable to act with energy; the new emperor encountered no opposition. On the contrary, he was immediately recognised by the military; and the archbishop of Novogorod, in the sermon preached on the occasion, thanked heaven that a prince so likely to imitate his illustrious grandfather was vouchsafed to Russia. Catherine was present. She wore a peculiar dress to conceal her pregnancy, — for she had long ceased to cohabit with her husband, and had taken Gregory Orloff to fill the vacancy occasioned by the absence of Poniatowski, — and her countenance exhibited some indication of the anxious feeling which she was obliged to repress. Compelled to defer the execution of her ambitious purposes, and uncertain what vengeance the czar might exert for her numerous infidelities, she might well be apprehensive. But she had no real foundation for the fear. Of all the sovereigns of that or any age, Peter was among the most clement. Whether he thought that clemency might bind to his interests one whose talents he had learned to respect, or that her adherents were too numerous and powerful to allow of her being punished; whether, in short, he had some return of affection for her, or his own conscience told him that she had nearly as much

1761 to 1762.

to forgive as he could have, we will not decide. One thing only is certain,—that, in about three months after his accession, he invested her with the domains held by the late empress. Certainly his was a mind incapable of long continued resentment. His heart was better than his head. Resolved to signalise his elevation by making others happy, he recalled all whom his predecessor had exiled, except Bestucheff. Many he restored to their former honours and possessions. Thus the aged Munich was made governor-general of Siberia, restored to his military command; while Biren, who certainly deserved no favour, was reinvested with the duchy of Courland. He did more: he restored the prisoners made by the generals of Elizabeth, and gave them money to defray their passage home. And as Frederic had always been the object of his idolatry, the world expected the armistice which he published, and which was preparatory to a peace between the two countries. That declaration was an extraordinary document. In it, the emperor declares that his first duty being the welfare of his people, that welfare could not be consulted so long as hostilities were continued; that the war, which had raged six years, had produced no advantage to either party, but done incredible harm to both; that he would no longer sanction the wanton destruction of his species; that, in conformity with the divine injunction relative to the preservation of the people committed to his charge, he puts an end to the unnatural, impious strife; and that he is resolved to restore the conquests made by his troops. In this case he has been praised, and with great justice, for his moderation: we fear, however, he does not merit so high a degree of praise of humanity as many writers have asserted. At this moment, while proclaiming so loudly his repugnance to war, he was sending troops into his native principality of Holstein, with the intention of wresting from the king of Denmark the duchy of Sleswick, which he considered the rightful inheritance of his family. He even declared that he

would never rest until he had sent that prince to Malabar. Nor must we omit to add, that from the enemy he became the ally of Frederic; that his troops joined with the Prussians to expel the Austrians from the kingdom. *His* humanity only changed sides: if it spared the blood of Prussians, it had little respect for that of Austrians. We may add, too, that there was something like madness in his enthusiastic regard for Frederic. He corresponded with that monarch, whom he proclaimed his master; whose uniform he wore; and in whose armies he obtained the rank of major-general. Had he been capable of improvement, his intercourse with that far-sighted prince might have benefited him. Frederic advised him to celebrate his coronation at Moscow, — a rite of superstitious importance in the eyes of the multitude. He was advised, too, not to engage in the Danish war; not to leave the empire. But advice was lost on him.

In some other respects, Peter deserves more credit 1762. than the admirers of Catherine — for even she has had them — are willing to allow him. 1. Not only did he pardon his personal enemies, — not only did the emperor forget the wrongs of the grand-duke, — but on several he bestowed the most signal favours. He suppressed that abominable inquisitorial court, *the secret chancery*, which had consigned so many victims to everlasting bondage, which had received delations from the most obscure and vicious of men, which had made every respectable master of a family tremble lest his very domestics should render him amenable to that terrible tribunal. Had this been the only benefit of his reign, well would he have been entitled to the gratitude of Russia. 2. He emancipated the nobles from the slavish dependence on the crown, so characteristic of that barbarous people. Previous to his reign, no boyard could enter on any profession, or forsake it when once embraced, or retire from public to private life, or dispose of his property, or travel into any foreign country, without the permission of the czar. By breaking their

chains at one blow, he began the career of social emancipation. 3. The military discipline of the nation loudly demanded reform, and he obeyed the call. He rescued the officers from the degrading punishments previously inflicted; he introduced a better system of tactics; and he gave more independence to the profession. He did not, however, exempt the common soldier from the corporal punishment which at any moment his superior officers might inflict. 4. He instituted a useful court to take cognisance of all offences committed against the public peace, and to chastise the delinquencies of the men intrusted with the general police of the empire. 5. He encouraged commerce, by lessening the duties on certain imports, and by abolishing them on certain exports. 6. And in all his measures, all his steps, he proved himself the protector of the poor. In fact, one reason for the dislike with which he was regarded by the nobles, arose from the preference which he always gave to the low over the high.

1762. But if impartial history must thus eulogise many of this monarch's acts, the same authority must condemn more. 1. He exhibited every where great contempt for the people whom he was called to govern. He had no indulgence for their prejudices, however indifferent, however inveterate. Thus, in commanding that the secular clergy should no longer wear long beards, and should wear the same garb as the clergy of other countries, he offended his subjects to a degree almost inconceivable to us.* In ordering the images to be removed from the churches — he was still a Lutheran, if any thing — he did not lessen the odium which his other acts had produced. The archbishop of Novogorod flatly refused to obey him, and was in consequence exiled; but the murmurs of the populace compelled the czar to recall him. 2. Still more censurable were his efforts to render the church wholly dependent on the state; — to destroy every thing like independence in its ministers;

* This statement has been disputed — apparently without authority.

to make religion a mere engine in the hands of arbitrary power for the attainment of any object. His purpose, in fact, was to seize all the demesnes of the church, — its extensive estates, its numerous serfs, — and to pension the clergy like other functionaries. In the ukase published on this occasion, he expresses a desire to relieve ecclesiastics of the temporal cares so prejudicial to their ghostly utility; to see that they indeed renounce the world, and, free from the burden of perishing treasures, apply their whole attention to the welfare of souls. He, therefore, decrees that the property of the church shall in future be managed by imperial officers; and that the clergy shall receive, from the fund thus accumulated, certain annual pensions, corresponding to their stations. Thus the archbishops of Novogorod, Moscow, and St. Petersburg, are to have each 2500 roubles; and the same sum is to be allowed for the support of their households, of their capitular clergy, and for the sustentation of the sacred edifices. But the twenty-three other archbishops and bishops are only to have 3000 roubles for both purposes. The salaries of the other ecclesiastics are carefully graduated. The inferior are divided into three classes, — individuals of the first to receive 500, of the second 300, of the third 150 roubles per annum. The surplus funds are to be applied to the foundation of hospitals, to the endowment of colleges, and to the general purposes of the state.

Peter attempted these and other innovations in virtue 1762. of the two-fold character which, from the time of his grandfather, the czars had been anxious to assume, as supreme heads alike of religion and of the state. Not even the grand-lama of Thibet ever arrogated a higher degree of theocratic authority. Indeed, our only surprise is, that in addition to their other functions they have not assumed that of bishops; that they have not arrayed themselves in pontificals, and celebrated mass at the altar. But they have certainly laid something like a claim to the sacerdotal character. Thus, on the death

of the patriarch, Peter I. opposed the election of another supreme head of the church; and when he found that the synod durst not venture on so far irritating the people as to dispense with the dignity, he insisted on being elected himself. If the sultan of Constantinople combined within himself the two-fold character, — why should it be refused to *him?* The Greek church has, in all ages, been the slave of despotism; in every country it has betrayed religion; and has not hesitated to sacrifice either doctrine or discipline at the command of an emperor. In the present instance the reign of Peter was too short to permit his designs of spoliation to be carried into effect; but, by confirming the dangerous precedent of his grandfather, he had done enough, and his successor Catherine was enabled to complete the robbery which he commenced.

1762. 3. But the most impolitic measure of Peter — that which rendered those who might have defended him indifferent to his fate — was his conduct towards the imperial guards. Two regiments he ordered to be in readiness for the Danish war. This was contrary to custom. In the faith of remaining near the court, most of the soldiers had embraced the military life; and they were as indignant as they were surprised, when told that they must exchange the dissipations of a metropolis for the fatigues and privations attending a distant campaign. They were offended, too, with the introduction of the Prussian discipline, which they found by experience to be far more rigid than that to which they had hitherto been subject; and they patriotically condemned the innovation as prejudicial to the military fame of the empire. Still more irritating was the preference which he every where gave to the German over the native troops. His most intimate friends were Germans; the officers around his person were of the same nation; Germans directed the manœuvres not only of his household but of all his regiments; and a German — prince George of Holstein, his uncle —

was placed at the head of all the imperial armies. 4. Couple these acts of imprudence with others of which he was hourly guilty. In his palace of Oranienbaum he constructed a Lutheran chapel; and, though he appears to have been indifferent to every form of religion, he held this in much more respect than the Greek form, which, in fact, he delighted to ridicule. If churchmen became his enemies, the people in general were not likely to become his friends when they heard of a boast — probably a true one — that in the last war he had acquainted the Prussian monarch with the secrets of the imperial cabinet. Lastly, he insulted men of honour by making them the jest of his buffoons.

Circumstances much less numerous and much less co- 1762.
gent than these would have sufficed so ambitious, able, and unprincipled a woman as Catherine to organise a powerful conspiracy against the czar. But he was accused of many other things of which he was perfectly innocent. In fact, no effort seems to have been spared to invent and propagate stories to his disadvantage. In some instances, it is scarcely possible to separate the true from the false. Whether, for example, he, from the day of his accession, resolved to divorce his wife, to marry his mistress, to set aside Paul from succession, and to adopt Ivan, still confined in the fortress of Schlusselberg, can never be known with certainty. That he secretly visited that unhappy prince, seems undoubted; but we have little evidence for the existence of the design attributed to him. If, in fact, he sincerely contemplated raising the daughter of count Worontzoff to the imperial throne, he would scarcely have adopted Ivan, unless he felt assured that no issue would arise from the second marriage. He could not, however, entertain any regard for a consort who had so grievously injured him, and little for a boy whom he knew was not his own. And, as there is generally some foundation for every report, there seems to be no doubt that Peter had promised to marry his mistress if she survived his wife. The report was enough for Catherine: on it she built her own

story, that her life was in danger; and that if her son were not designed for a similar fate, he would at least have that of Ivan.

1762. The anxiety of the empress to secure adherents was continually active; and as her husband passed so much time in drunkenness, her motions were not so closely scrutinised as they should have been. Gregory Orlof, her criminal favourite, was the man in whom she placed the most reliance. Gregory had four brothers — all men of enterprise, of courage, of desperation; and none of them restricted by the least moral principle. Potemkin, afterwards so celebrated, was the sixth. This man was, perhaps, the most useful of the conspirators, as by means of his acquaintance with the priests of the metropolis he was able to enlist that formidable body in the cause. They were not slow to proclaim the impiety of the czar, his contempt of the orthodox faith, his resolution "to banish the fear of the Lord" from the Russian court, to convert churches into hospitals and barracks, to seize on all the revenues of the church, and to end by compelling the most orthodox of countries to embrace the errors of Luther. The archimandrites received these reports from the parish priests, the bishops from the archimendrites; nor was there much difficulty in obtaining an entrance for them into the recesses of the neighbouring monasteries. The hetman of the Cossacs, an officer of great authority and of great riches, was next gained. Not less effectual than he was the princess Daschkof, who, though the sister of Peter's mistress, was the most ardent of the conspirators: perhaps the threatened exaltation of that sister, by rendering her jealous, only strengthened her attachment to the czarina. Through the instrumentality of this woman, count Panin, the foreign minister, and the governor of the grand duke Paul, was gained over. Whether the argument employed was, as one writer asserts, the sacrifice of her sister, or whether, as another affirms, she was the daughter of the count, who notoriously intrigued with her mother, is of no moment. What is

certain is, that the count was exceedingly fond of her; and one authority expressly asserts that *he* became acquainted with the details of the conspiracy *before* her, and admitted her into the plot. This, however, is less probable than the relation we have given; for the princess had long been the friend of Catherine.—Her activity was unceasing. A Piedmontese adventurer, Odart by name, being forced to leave his native country for some crime, and having tried in vain to obtain a subsistence in the neighbouring capitals, wisely resolved to try his fortune in St. Petersburg — a city where guilt might reside with impunity, and where it had only to be successful to win the applause of mankind. As he had a considerable knowledge of the fine arts, especially of music and painting, he had little difficulty in obtaining an introduction to the princess Daschkof. She, who had a shrewd insight into human character, soon perceived that this supple, crafty, active, sober, intriguing, unprincipled foreigner was just the man that was required to act as spy and confidential agent. He was introduced to Catherine, whose opinion confirmed that of her favourite. No choice could, indeed, have been better. Little cared he in what service he was employed. If a partisan were to be gained, no man could be more insinuating: if an enemy were to be removed, he had his pistols and his dirk, without which he never appeared in the street. His penetration soon enabled him to secure the aid of two other bravos, — the one, Possik, a lieutenant in the guards; the other, Globof, a lawyer in the employment of the senate. Of the character of these men, some notion may be formed from the fact that Possik offered to stab the emperor in the midst of the court. Like most of his countrymen, he knew how to ally duplicity with desperation; he was at once the hycocritical intriguer and the remorseless bravo. Through the same princess Daschkof, Volkonshi, major-general of the guards, was won; and by Potemkin, or his ghostly allies, the archbishop of Novogorod was soon in the secret. The het-

man of the Cossacs went further. Great as was the danger of intrusting that secret to many, he assembled the officers who served under him, assured them that he had heard of a conspiracy to dethrone the emperor, too irresistible to be appeased; and exhorted them to seize the favourable moment of propitiating the favour of the czarina, rather than, by remaining hostile or inactive, to bring down vengeance on their own heads. His advice had all the success that he could desire.

1762. While these most vicious and every way most worthless of men were thus employed in her behalf, Catherine was no less active. She knew that count Panin espoused the cause of her son; less, perhaps, from affection to his charge, than from the hope of exercising more power under an infant emperor than under one of the mother's enterprising character. Her promise, that his influence should be second only to her own, made him her willing instrument. His defection constrained the rest of the conspirators: there was no more heard of a regency; and Catherine was to be proclaimed autocratix of all the Russias. Without increasing unnecessarily the number of the initiated, she yet prepared the minds of many for some impending change, and rendered them eager for its arrival by her artful and seasonable insinuations. If an officer of the guards stood near her, she whispered in his ear that the emperor had resolved on disbanding the present force, and exiling its chiefs: if an ecclesiastic, she bewailed the fate of the pure orthodox church: if a less interested person, she lamented her own misfortunes and those of her son, — both doomed to immediate imprisonment, and she, at least, to an ultimate death. If a senatore were near, she deplored the meditated destruction of the venerable and patriotic body to which he belonged; the transformation of the debauchees, perpetually around the emperor, into judges; and the substitution of the *Code Frederic* for the ancient law of Russia. If she passed a group of abject, poor citizens, or if she received a petition from them, she

observed, with tears, "Would that I had the power to relieve your distress! but, alas! I am a cipher!"

By these means she prepared the minds of the people 1762.
for the revolution: her affability, in fact, was the theme of their praise. But she did not trust merely to their good will. She knew that, unless two or three regiments were secured, the insurrection might not find immediate supporters, and that the critical moment might be lost. Without money this object could not be obtained; and though both she and her confidential agents voluntarily disbursed all that they could command, and converted their most valuable effects into coin, the amount was alarmingly inadequate. In this emergency she applied to the French ambassador for a loan; and when he showed less readiness to accommodate her than she expected, she addressed herself, we are told, to the ambassador from England, and with more success. But this statement is untrue: it was not the English ambassador, but an English merchant, who furnished her with the sum she demanded. With this aid, she prevailed on the greater part of three regiments to await the signal for joining her.

Though the conspirators were, in point of numbers, 1762.
formidable, their attempt was one of danger. Peter was about to leave Russia for Holstein, to prosecute the war against the Danish king; and of the troops whom he had assembled, though the greater part were on their march, some were now with him, and might be induced to defend him. Besides, the two great divisions of his fleet were at Cronstadt and Revel, and nobody could foresee how they would act. The conspirators agreed that he should be taken by surprise; that midnight should see him transferred from the throne to a dungeon. The festival of St. Peter and St. Paul — one of high importance in the Greek church — was approaching: the following day the emperor had resolved to depart. It was to be celebrated at Peterhof; there it was resolved to arrest him. But accident hastened the execution of the plot. Until the arrival of the festival,

Peter left St. Petersburg for Oranienbaum, to pass in riot and debauchery the intervening time. Accompanied by the most dissolute of his favourites, and by many of the court ladies, — women who held their reputation as light as their chastity, — he anticipated the excesses which awaited his arrival. That he had received some hints of a plot, though he was unacquainted alike with its object and authors, is exceedingly probable. His royal ally of Prussia is said to have advised him to be on his guard; and several notes, to have been addressed to him by his own subjects. If such information was received, it made no impression on him; and, indeed, its vagueness might well render him indifferent to it. But on the eve of his departure, when the superior officer of Passik, who had accidentally learned that danger attended the steps of the emperor, denounced the lieutenant, and the culprit was arrested, he had an opportunity of ascertaining all the details of the conspiracy. He treated the denunciation with contempt; affirmed that Passik belonged to the dregs of the people, and was not to be dreaded; and proceeded to Oranienbaum. The culprit, though narrowly watched, had time to write a line to the hetman, whom he exhorted to instant action, if they wished to save their lives. The note fell into the hands of the princess Daschkof, who immediately assembled the conspirators. Not a moment was to be lost: the presence of Catherine was indispensable; and, though it was midnight, and she was at Peterhof, seven leagues distant from St. Petersburg, one of the Orlofs went to bring her. He arrived at the fortress, entered a private door, and, by a secret staircase, ascended to the apartments occupied by the empress. It was now two o'clock in the morning: the empress was asleep; and her surprise was not unmixed with terror, when she was awakened by a soldier. In a moment she comprehended her situation: she arose, called one of her women, and both, being hastily clad in a strange habit, descended with the soldier to one of the gates, passed the centinel without being recognised, and stepped into the carriage

which was waiting for her. Orlof was the driver, and he urged the horses with so much severity, that before they had proceeded half way from Peterhof to Petersburg, they fell down from exhaustion. The situation of the empress was critical: she might at any moment be overtaken; and she was certain that with the dawn of day Peter would acquire some more definite intelligence of the plot. In a state bordering on distraction, she took refuge in the first house that she approached: it was a tavern, and here she burned the letters which had passed between her and the conspirators. Again she recommenced her journey on foot: by good fortune she met a countryman with a cart; Orlof seized the vehicle, the peasant ran away; Catherine ascended it, and, in this very dignified manner, she, her woman, and Orlof, entered St. Petersburg about seven o'clock on the morning of July the 9th.

No sooner was Catherine in the capital, than she was 1762
joined by the hetman; and, accompanied by him, she hastened to the barracks of the troops which he commanded. Four companies immediately declared for her; their example constrained the rest of the regiment; three other regiments, hearing the acclamation, and seeing the people hurry to the spot, joined in the cry; all Petersburg was in motion; a report was spread that she and her son had just escaped assassination by order of the czar; her adherents rapidly multiplied; and, accompanied by about 2000 soldiers, with five times that number of citizens, who loudly proclaimed her sovereign of Russia, she went to the church of Our Lady of Kasan. Here every thing was prepared for her reception: the archbishop of Novogorod, with a host of ecclesiastics, awaited her at the altar; she swore to observe the laws and religion of the empire; the crown was solemnly placed on her head; she was proclaimed sole monarch of Russia, and the grand-duke Paul her successor; and *Te Deum* concluded the eventful ceremony. From the church she proceeded to the palace occupied

by the late empress; the mob crowded to see her, and to take the oath of allegiance; while the more respectable portion of the citizens were awed into submission, or at least into silence, by a report that Peter had just been killed by falling from his horse. To gratify the populace, the taverns were abandoned to them; the same fate visited the houses of all who were obnoxious to the conspirators; intoxication was general; robbery was exercised with impunity; the palace, to which Catherine had hastened, was strengthened; a numerous guard was stationed in its defence; a manifesto was proclaimed; a notification was delivered into the hands of each foreign minister, and the revolution was complete.*

One object of the conspirators had been to close every avenue of egress from the capital, that Peter might not be acquainted with the revolution until it was too powerful to be repressed. All the troops in the vicinity were called within the walls; but there was one regiment, about 1600 strong, which lay between the city and Peterhof, and the conduct of which was doubtful. Without the slightest knowledge of what had taken place, the colonel arrived in the city, and was soon persuaded not only to declare for the new sovereign, but to prevail on the regiment to follow his example. He was successful; and, with the whole body, he returned in triumph to the capital. On this very day Peter had promised to dine with Catherine: on reaching Peterhof he was surprised to hear of her flight. Worontzof, the father of his mistress, the father also of the princess Daschkof, who had witnessed without repugnance the dishonour alike of his wife and daughter, proposed to the emperor to visit St. Petersburg to ascertain the cause of her departure; and, if any insurrection were meditated, to suppress it. He arrived in the presence of the empress, was induced to swear allegiance to her, and was ordered to retire into his own house. But Peter had

* See Appendix A.

already been informed of the revolution; and he traversed with hasty steps the gardens of Peterhof, indecisive and terrified. Of little avail were his buffoons, or his women, in such an emergency. Yet he was not wholly deserted. The brave Munich, whose locks were ripened by age, and whose wisdom equalled his valour, advised him instantly to place himself at the head of his Holstein troops, march on the capital, and thereby enable all who were yet loyal to join him. Whether the result would have been such as the veteran anticipated, viz. a counter-revolution, may well be doubted; but there can be no doubt that a considerable number of soldiers would have joined him, and that he would have been able to enter into negotiations with the hostile party. He was too timid to adopt the suggestion: nothing, in fact, could urge him to decisive action. When informed that Catherine was making towards Peterhof, at the head of 10,000 men, all that he could resolve to do was to send messengers to her with proposals. His first was, that the supreme power should be divided between them; the second, when no reply was deigned to his letter, that he should be allowed to leave Russia, with his mistress and a favourite, and pass the rest of his days in Holstein. She detained his messenger, and still advanced. Munich now advised him to embark for Cronstadt, and join his fleet, which was still faithful; but, unfortunately, he delayed so long that one of Catherine's emissaries had time to corrupt the garrison of the fort: on arriving, he was prohibited from disembarking, and told, that if he did not immediately retire his vessel would be sunk by the cannon of the place. Still he had a fleet at Revel; and, if it were disloyal, he might escape into Prussia, Sweden, or Holstein. With the fatality, however, which characterised all his measures on this eventful day, he returned to Oranienbaum, where he disembarked at four o'clock in the morning of July the 10th. Here he was soon visited by the emissaries of Catherine; was persuaded to sign

an act of abdication; was conducted to Peterhof; was divested of all his imperial orders; was clad in a mean dress, and consigned, first to one of the country houses of the hetman, and soon afterwards to the fortress of Robscha, about twenty miles distant from Peterhof. He was not allowed to see the empress; and his mistress and attendants were separated from him.

1762. Short, it is proverbially said, to a dethroned sovereign is the passage from the prison to the grave. Within one short week Peter was no more. The catastrophe was hastened by the signs of remorse exhibited by many soldiers of the guard, and by the mournful apathy of the people after the first excitement was past. The imprisoned sovereign was pitied; and pity was too dangerous a sentiment to be long tolerated. A physician of the court, accompanied by some of the accomplices, hastens to Robscha: Peter is persuaded to drink with them; and a deadly poison is secretly put into his cup. Its effects, however, were not so quick as was desired: the victim began to cry out that he was poisoned; Baratinski, one of the conspirators, accompanied by Alexis, Orloff, and perhaps Potemkin, rushed into the apartment; a struggle followed; but in a few moments the emperor lay on the floor, a strangled corpse. The news of his death soon reached the capital; physicians were made to declare that his death was natural; Catherine, pretending to be overwhelmed with grief, shut herself up in her palace with Gregory Orloff, and, amidst funeral rites remarkable for their meanness, the imperial corpse was committed to the tomb.

Whether Catherine *commanded* this deed of blood has been much disputed. There can be little doubt that she did. None of the conspirators would have ventured to such an extremity unless distinctly authorised by her. To throw the blame on them is absurd, when we know that the highest dignities rewarded the perpetrators. Add too, that the character of the empress was as much sullied by blood as by lust; that her whole life

was one tissue of crime; and he must be credulous indeed who can believe that she did not expressly enjoin the deed. Eternal the infamy that covers the memory of this wretched woman, — the most unprincipled, beyond all comparison, of female sovereigns, since Catherine de' Medicis!

CHAP. XI.

CATHERINE II. — MELANCHOLY FATE OF IVAN. — DISAFFECTION TO THE EMPRESS. — REBELLION OF PUGATSCHEF. — PERSONAL CHARACTER OF CATHERINE. — HER INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION. — HER FOREIGN POLICY: 1. TOWARDS POLAND — 2. TOWARDS TURKEY — 3. TOWARDS SWEDEN. — PROGRESS OF RUSSIAN AGGRANDISEMENT FROM THE ACCESSION OF PETER I. TO THE DEATH OF CATHERINE II.

1762 to 1764. It is some consolation to find that most of the instruments employed in this revolution had little reason to congratulate themselves on the result. The princess Daschkof, venturing to complain of the ingratitude she had received, was exiled. The archbishop of Novogorod, who had sacrificed his conscience, his religion, and the rights of the clergy, was forbidden the court, and forced to shelter his despised head in retirement. Even Gregory Orloff was, in a few years, disgraced; and the same fate befell most of the other actors in the tragical drama. In fact, many of the warmest partizans of Catherine found that little had been gained by the change of rulers. The church had to complain that she persevered in the reforms, or rather let us say the spoliation, commenced by Peter III.; the people, that their contributions were more frequent and heavy; the courtiers, that the empress knew how to fulfil much better than to perform — that she was cold-hearted and ungrateful. Even the soldiers, ashamed of their past conduct, and not much pleased with the rigorous discipline enforced by the czarina, began to murmur; and thousands, in court and camp, in city and cloister, turned their eyes towards the imprisoned Ivan. She

felt that her throne was shaken; the imperial prisoner was guarded with greater rigour; and orders were given to despatch him whenever an attempt should be made to release him.

In the fate of this prince there is something inex- 1764. pressibly mournful. Unable to read, and debarred, during the chief part of his life, from conversing with the soldiers who guarded him, he had no resource against the evils of solitude, no method of relieving the monotonous passage of time. The consequence was that he became pensive, sombre, imaginative; the creature of caprice; passing, sometimes, from a state of mind wholly apathetic to the most violent excesses, and *vice versâ*. It was evident that his intellects were deranged. Once Elizabeth had him brought to St. Petersburg, and she is said to have been much affected by his appearance; she certainly directed that greater indulgence should be shown him. In 1762, Peter visited him in his prison; but he was as ignorant of the emperor's quality as he had been of Elizabeth's. He often discoursed without meaning; yet his memory told him what he had once been. As he was only fourteen months old when he exchanged a palace for a dungeon, he could not remember any event prior to Elizabeth's accession; but he had been with his parents until his eighth year; and they had acquainted him with the secret of his birth, and with the revolution which had precipitated him from the throne. Hence, it is no wonder that in a mind which could not always distinguish the succession of ideas, he should sometimes have called himself the czar Ivan. In the presence of Peter he complained bitterly of Elizabeth. He asserted, however, that he should, in all probability, one day reascend the throne; and he mentioned the grand-duke and grand-duchess, of whose succession he was ignorant, as princes who stood in the way of his just rights. Peter asked him, what he would do with both if his dreams of empire should ever be realised? "Put

them to death!" was the unhesitating reply. Though little pleased with it, the emperor was attentive to his situation, and in the view of mitigating its severity, began to construct a small house for him within the enclosure of the fortress; but did not live to see its completion. That Catherine herself had also an interview with him, is certain. Her object might be curiosity, but more probably it was a desire to ascertain whether she could like him for a husband. Several of her bishops, several even of her senate, had advised her to marry him; but she was disgusted with his appearance, and there is too much reason to infer that when she left him his doom was sealed in her own mind. She caused him to be guarded with much severity; she changed his gaolers, and placed over him two officers whom she could trust, and who, she well knew, would not hesitate to execute the orders she had given.

1764. The occasion for the trial of their fidelity arrived soon afterwards. A lieutenant of the Smolensko regiment, Mirovitz by name, having unsuccessfully applied for the restoration of some confiscated property, determined on revenge. In a country so fertile in revolutions, the design of enlarging Ivan and placing him on the throne was not so quixotic as might at first appear, especially when the discontent of no inconsiderable portion of the people, of the church in general, of many officers in the army, and many courtiers, was thrown into the scale. He had, however, no connections except among the lowest of the soldiers. Fortunately for his views, a detachment of his regiment was stationed on duty at the fortress of Schlusselburg; and at the same time the empress was absent on a tour in Livonia. While traversing the ramparts, he distinguished the apartment in which Ivan was confined; and he resolved on making an attempt to release him. On the night of the 4th of July, 1764,—two years after Catherine's accession,—he opened his design to three corporals and three privates of his company, and

they agreed to assist him. Two hours after midnight was the time appointed for the effort. When it arrived, he awoke his men, and ranged them in order of battle. Awakened by the noise, the commandant of the fortress descended to the guard, and asked Mirovitz the cause of it. For a reply he received a blow on the head from the butt-end of a musket, and was conveyed senseless to the guard-house. An attack was now made on the eight soldiers who had the immediate custody of the prince, and who returned the fire. As Mirovitz had assured the whole detachment that he was acting by the express order of the empress, this resistance surprised them, and they insisted on examining the instrument; he produced one which he had forged for the occasion, and again led them to the assault. The two officers to whom the empress had entrusted the guard of Ivan, and who held her own order for his death, in the event of any effort to release him, perceived that resistance, and they hastened to his apartment to execute their bloody instructions. He was wrapt in a deep sleep from which he was never to awake: their swords instantly deprived him of life, in the twenty-fifth year of his age. The dungeon was now opened, and Mirovitz, with the soldiers, was permitted to enter. His consternation on viewing the bleeding corpse was extreme; in a plaintive voice he bewailed the event, and by delivering his sword into the hands of the officers, yielded himself their prisoner. The attempt, still more the fate of Ivan, made a deep, however transient, impression on the people, and even the soldiers. Many of the imperial guards commented in no measured terms on the conduct of Catherine; and had any one of sufficient ability been present to head them, the throne would have been lost to her for ever. But no accomplice of note appears to have been engaged in this desperate transaction; at least Mirovitz persisted to his last breath in asserting that he had none; and after his trial was over, and his sentence past, he laid his head on the block with the calm indifference of an

enthusiast. He was the only one put to death; his few and obscure accomplices were punished with exile.

While on the subject of insurrections,—of attempts at revolutions,—we shall suspend our notice of the other events of this memorable reign, until we have related the rebellion of the Cossacs, a rebellion which at one time threatened, if not to precipitate Catherine from the throne she had usurped, certainly to dismember her vast empire.

Though the real claimants of the crown were thus tragically removed, a great part of the nation was far from well disposed to the empress. The priests, in particular, beholding with detestation the same measures of spoliation that had led them to join in the deposition of Peter III., were loud in their invectives. But they were much more to be dreaded in the bosoms of the families to whom their pastoral duties gave them access; and they were not slow to fan the slumbering embers of discontent. No good men, indeed, could live satisfied under the rule of such a woman. Her throne, however, was shaken, not so much by the clergy, as by the credulity characteristic of a barbarous people. A report was at length spread that Peter was alive; and it was received with joy in the more distant provinces. This disposition was sure to produce several adventurers, each of whom proclaimed himself the identical czar. Five of these impostors had already appeared, and had, after a short struggle, been vanquished and put to death, when a sixth, the famous Pugatschef, arose to disturb the tranquillity of Catherine's despotism.

1773. Pugatschef was a Cossac of the Don, born in the environs of Simonskaja. Endowed with an enterprising genius, and inured from infancy to all the hardships of his tribe, tall, robust, vigorous alike in body and mind, and placed in circumstances which enabled him to judge human character, this half-civilised man longed for distinction. Taking advantage of the law promulgated by Peter III.—that any Russian might leave the country,

and enter the service of any power not at war with the empire, he had served in the recent campaigns under the king of Prussia. On the restoration of peace, he had transferred his sword to the use of the empress, and had a commission in a Cossac regiment. After an experience of two or three campaigns, the Cossac troops were replaced by others from the same country, and were allowed to return home. Pugatschef was one of those who thus revisited his native deserts. He found among the people much dissatisfaction with the government, much hatred towards the vices of Catherine; and, obscure as he was, he began to meditate the surest means of overturning her throne, or at least of detaching from her dominions the vast provinces on the banks of the Don and the Volga. As the natives were generally dissenters from the Greek church, and were subject to persecution from the established clergy; as they had grievances of a temporal no less than of a religious kind to redress, he was sure to meet with adherents. In fact, their discontent was arrived at such a pitch that they sighed for a leader. Pugatschef presented himself; but he was compelled to proceed with caution. Where there was so much to be gained by treachery, confidence was to be warily reposed in the instruments of this design. Of this truth, the rebel had seen melancholy proof; since the information furnished by one of his earliest adherents led to his apprehension, and to his immurement in the prison of Casan. While there, he was guarded with negligence, and he effected his escape. He first repaired to the town of Jaizkoi, situated on the banks of the river Jaik (now the Ural), and the seat of a Cossac tribe distinguished for valour, and animated by the bitterest hatred to their persecutors, the members of the Greek church. More than once they had defied the government, and slain the commissioners sent to appease them.

Favourable as was the disposition of these people, Pugatschef, who had learned wisdom by experience, was

cautious in his steps. He first entered the service of a Cossac, that he might the better conceal the designs which he was meditating. Here he soon divined the character of his master, to whom he unbosomed himself, and who became his first adherent. The kinsmen and friends of Koschenikof were, one by one, under the oath of secrecy, admitted to the deliberations that now began to be held; the insurrection was organised; Pugatschef was elected chief; and as he bore a strong resemblance to the murdered Peter, he was to be proclaimed by that name and title. Here was another motive for the imposture: by his ecclesiastical reforms, in other words, by his persecution of the dominant church, Peter had left a memory dear to these barbarians; and no doubt was entertained, that the moment he was believed to be alive, and his standard unfurled, he would be joined by many. In conformity with this device, a report was soon spread that Peter III. was alive; that a soldier had been sacrificed in his stead; that he had escaped from prison, and would soon be in arms to recover his rightful inheritance. It was credited by thousands, who waited only to see the first success of any attempt to join in the rebellion. But the steps of Pugatschef were again beset with danger. Both he and his host were denounced, and while the latter was seized, he contrived to escape. His position was discouraging enough: of nine adherents—all that he had yet secured—two were in custody, and seven only obeyed him. But a change was at hand. In two days after his precipitate departure, the number was augmented to 300. With this little band, he suddenly appeared before Jaizkoi, which he summoned to surrender. The answer was sent by 5000 Cossacs, who had orders to take him prisoner. Knowing the character of his countrymen, Pugatschef advanced towards them, and caused one of his officers to present them with a manifesto, explanatory both of his assumed title, and of the objects which had forced him to arms for the recovery of his throne. The general,

indeed, seized the instrument, perhaps in the view of destroying it; but they loudly demanded that it should be read, and when he persisted in refusing, 500 of them passed over to the impostor. Fearing that the desertion might be more general, he withdrew into the citadel, while Pugatschef encamped about a league from the place. The 500 who had first combined with him, had constrained eleven of their officers to pass over at the same time; but these men, faithful to their engagements, and suspecting, perhaps, with whom they had to deal, refused to take the oath required: in revenge, they were hung from the nearest tree. This time, however, he was disappointed in his expectation of being joined by the whole garrison: the will, indeed, was there; but as every one was not the dupe of his artifice, doubt and hesitation prevented the majority from declaring for him, until some brilliant success should enable them to do so with impunity.

Aware of the position in which he was placed, Pugatschef made no attempt on the fortress: on the contrary, he retired towards Orenburg, in the expectation of new adherents. Nor was that expectation vain: in a few days he was at the head of 1500. With this force he advanced against the fortified town of Iletzka, which opened its gates, and of which the garrison passed over to him. Even the hetman accompanied it; but had reason to repent the step. Pugatschef wanted fools, not men of understanding,—slaves, not men habituated to command, — and the body of the hetman soon swung in the breeze. The pieces of ordnance found in this place enabled the rebel to undertake greater enterprises. Casypnaja, a far more important place, defended by a strong garrison, and by numerous pieces of artillery, was next assailed. After a brief resistance it fell, the Cossacs joining the besiegers, and the rest of the garrison being compelled to shout for the emperor Peter III. The inhabitants — all at least able to carry arms — followed the example

of the soldiers; and with a train of artillery, with an augmented force, the chief proceeded to another fortified place. The same success attended him; and with the same inhumanity, while he admitted the common soldiers to join him, he executed the officers. He was, indeed, a horrible barbarian, familiarised to scenes of slaughter; detesting superiority of every kind, and resolved on having no ruler but himself throughout the Cossac provinces. In accordance with his levelling system, he never pardoned the officers, or the nobles, who had the misfortune to fall into his power; and his executions were sometimes accompanied by a barbarity revolting to our civilised taste. Thus, in the surrender of the last fortress, the commandant was major Sharlof. Some weeks before he had been married to a lovely woman; and the wounds he received in the defence were so serious, that he was conveyed to his own house, to be nursed by his young wife. No sooner was Pugatschef master of the place, than he ordered the commandant to be brought before him. The lady followed, bathed in tears, threw himself at his feet, and solicited the pardon of her husband. "I will hang him before thy face!" was the reply. Again she knelt, but without effect; the body of the commandant soon blackened in the air. Nor was this the worst: she was compelled to satisfy the brutal lust of the barbarian. During two months she had the misfortune to be his mistress; but becoming tired of her, he abandoned her to his followers; and, after sufferings worse than death, she was assassinated, together with an infant brother.

The strange intelligence—perhaps the more welcome because it was strange—that the czar Peter was in arms for the recovery of his throne, and for the redress of the grievances under which the Cossacs groaned, was now widely diffused in the southern provinces of Russia. Its effect was the augmentation of the rebel army. The reduction of Talischova, a fortress defended by full

1000 of the regular troops, sufficiently illustrates its force. Here, as elsewhere, his cruelties were the theme of popular rumour,—the humane detesting and fearing him, the oppressed savages rejoicing in the vengeance he had vowed against their persecutors. His fame spread; his followers increased; and fortress after fortress acknowledged his power. It was now high time to acquaint the court of St. Petersburg with the progress of the rebellion, and general Carr was sent to repress it. The task was one of no ordinary difficulty. The false Peter was not only master of many fortresses, but of a large train of artillery, and of an army of 5000 men. Before Carr arrived, Pugatschef laid siege to Orenburg, the capital of the provinces. It was well defended; assault after assault was given in vain, and the loss of the assailants compelled them to retreat. In a subsequent action, one of their detachments lost 2000 men. The check and this loss might be expected to damp the ardour of the rebels. They had no such effect. On the contrary, when general Carr arrived, and despatched his advanced guard to annoy them, Pugatschef, who was at the head of 16,000 men, annihilated the detachment, and hung the officers who fell into his hands. He was now required to measure his army with the main body, commanded by the general in person. The result was brilliant: Carr was completely defeated; and, in a panic, compelled to retire. He left, however, another general, Freymann, to oppose, if possible, the advance of the rebels, and returned to Moscow with greater precipitation than he had left it.

The effects of this victory over the regular troops of 1774. the empire was such as might have been foreseen. Province after province declared for the impostor, and a panic seized on the governors of the numerous fortresses dispersed through those vast regions. Three great chiefs, of as many Tartar tribes, joined his standard. Elated by this acquisition, he now began to act the sovereign in earnest. He nominated lieutenant-

generals, and conferred on his second in command the title of *count*. His *matériel* was increased. He constructed founderies for casting large guns, and established several powder manufactories. Catherine was alarmed at the intelligence which reached her of his daily success: though she affected to despise him, her sleepless nights proved how distrustful she was of her people. But she was not a woman to remain inactive when danger was at hand. Another army was soon ready; and at its head was general Bibikof, distinguished alike for courage and experience. He arrived at Casan in February, 1774, and actively distributed a proclamation of the empress, exposing the imposture of Pugatschef, and the infatuated delusion of his followers. But the rebel chief could also publish manifestos; and in one he boldly charged with rebellion, and threatened summary vengeance on, all who dared to dispute the right of himself, the liege czar, Peter III. He even caused the coin to be impressed with his effigies; and on the obverse, *Redivivus et Altor*. Orenburg and Ufa were besieged by his troops, when he heard of Bibikof's arrival, and he had no apprehension of the result, whether in reference to the sieges, or to the new enemies he was constrained to oppose. But success frequently forsook him, though not for ever. His detachments were frequently defeated; he was compelled to raise the siege of the two places; he himself was twice overthrown by the imperial forces; and the prestige that surrounded his name being thus destroyed, his cause was deemed hopeless. Pursued from fortress to fortress, from one district to another, his army not one eighth of its former magnitude, he was several times compelled to turn round and face the enemy. But if he was frequently unfortunate, his was not a mind to sink under the change: with renewed vigour he continued to struggle; and he must have had numerous resources, or he could not so easily have recruited his numbers. In fact, he continued formidable, notwithstanding the reverses which he ex-

perienced; and when his force was disbanded one day, a new one arose to supply its place. Thus at one time he had scarcely 100 men, and was compelled to seek for safety in the Ural mountains: in a few days, he was at the head of 20,000, and was pressing the siege of Casan, which he took by storm, though he was unable to reduce the citadel. The atrocities which he committed were horrible. Under the walls of that city, however, he was signally defeated; the siege of the garrison was relieved, and the town itself wrested from his grasp.

There is an anecdote relating to the rebel's seizure of Casan, very characteristic of the man. In the view of exposing his imposture, his first wife, with whom he had lived on the banks of the Don, and whom he had long forsaken, was brought to the place, and ultimately into his presence, as if by accident. He instantly recognised her, no less than the object for which she was produced. Without the least embarrassment, however, he exclaimed, "Take care of this woman! I knew her husband, who rendered me good service!" He that could be thus coolly deceptive, must have been a villain of no ordinary stamp.

This last victory was so decisive, that no expectation 1774 was indulged of Pugatschef's again appearing in arms. to But though he had only a few hundred men left, and 1775. was compelled to seek refuge in the recesses of a forest, this imperial farce was not yet ended. If the Cossacs could retreat with extreme precipitation, whenever fortune was adverse, they could also rally as suddenly. While in this forest he was joined by a few hundreds more. With a body of 1500, he proceeded to the Volga, with the intention of crossing it, and of trying his fortune in another region. As his motions were observed, he could pass with scarcely a third of his force: the rest he directed to await his return, and, in the interim, to do all the mischief they could. But if the transit were effected, what could he expect to achieve with 500 men

only, without artillery, without ammunition, without any plan of operations? If his position seemed desperate to others, he felt that it was not so to himself: he well knew the genius of the people among whom he appeared. In many points, he bore a strong resemblance to our Wat Tyler. He assumed at once a temporal and spiritual mission. It was, he said, his duty to free the peasants from the tyranny of the landed nobles, and the Greek dissidents from that of the dominant church. No wonder that thousands after thousands resorted to his banner, especially as they had no doubt of his being the identical Peter III. In another respect, he imitated the English demagogue: he hung whatever nobles, whatever ecclesiastics, fell into his hands; and he pillaged the country through which he passed with merciless severity.—His force increased as he proceeded; several towns, slightly fortified, opened their gates to him; and sometimes he halted a few days, to await the arrival of the nobles whom he ordered to be surprised and seized within a circle of twenty leagues; and while these were invariably put to death, he proclaimed the emancipation of their serfs. He was pursued, indeed, by two detachments, who, though uncertain of his previous line of march, yet, by diverging from a given point, hoped to fall in with him. As he was suspected of a design on Moscow, where the empress was generally detested, one of these divisions closed the way to that city. But he had no such intention: his only objects were to increase his army, to reduce fortresses, and ultimately to detach the Cossacs and Tartars from the Russian domination. Saratof he took by assault; Dmitreusk shared the same fate; and one of the Russian detachments was defeated with heavy loss. With an army much augmented by the Calmuck Tartars, he laid seige to Zaritzin; but, though he was joined by 1100 of the Cossac garrison, he was constrained to raise it on the approach of the Russian colonel Michelsohn, and return to Saratof. But here he was insecure; and in the search of

some stronger fortress he still continued to retreat. But he was overtaken by the indefatigable colonel; and a struggle was inevitable. As he was still at the head of 20,000 men, and posted between two deep roads, with twenty-four pieces of ordnance, he was not averse to the action. But his position was turned; he was assailed in flank and rear; after a brief though desperate resistance, a panic seized his followers, who precipitately fled, leaving the guns, ammunition, with 6000 prisoners, and 2000 dead, on the field. In the pursuit many more were destroyed, and 4000 more captives were added to the rest. The victory was complete. Pugatschef fled with as much rapidity as any: with 300 men only he reached the banks of the Volga; but even these were too many to pass over in the four small boats which lay moored to the bank. Not a moment was to be lost: the Russian cavalry was already in sight; and with sixty men only the rebel chief crossed the river. Scarcely had he left the shore, when the enemy appeared; but, as the men whom he had left sought a grave in the water, he was at least spared the mortification of seeing them fall into the hands of his pursuers.

We approach the closing scenes of this adventurer's 1775.
extraordinary life. With his handful of men, he plunged into the vast desert. But his fate was sealed: the outlets were soon closed by three separate detachments; and, as he could not long remain without water, without provisions, without habitation, the strictest watch was kept for him. It was now that his followers began to feel the hopelessness of his situation. If they remained a few hours, or, at most, a few days, longer in his company, their lives must be the penalty: if they surrendered him to his enemies, a full pardon might be expected. They plotted together; fell on him as he was eating a piece of horse-flesh (the only food he could command); told him that he had played the part of emperor long enough; and, though he made

a desperate resistance, he was overpowered, bound, and delivered over to his enemies. As Moscow had testified some interest in his behalf (probably from a belief that he was the real Peter), he was taken to that city, and there executed. The usual punishment of traitors in Russia was successively to amputate the legs, the arms, and, lastly, the head, leaving only the bare trunk. But Pugatschef escaped this unnecessary pain. His executioners, more humane than his judges, commenced by striking off his head.

That we may have a clear notion of this sovereign's reign, we proceed to contemplate her — in her personal character, — in her internal administration, — in her foreign policy. Though we have said enough on the first of these heads to give the reader a general knowledge of it, the events of her reign are so interwoven with her character, that we must devote a few observations to it.

1. Catherine was the first sovereign in all history whose lover had a distinct post, with peculiar privileges and emoluments. Other women, however licentious in heart, had so much fear of worldly censure as to conceal their offences against modesty; but she made no such effort. Aspiring to the title of female philosopher, and deeply imbued with the libertinism of the French school, she scorned to dissemble: she despised at the very time she outraged public decency. Omitting Soltikof and Poniatowski, with whom her intercourse was brief, and whom her dependent situation as grand duchess prevented her from acknowledging, her first favourite was Gregory Orloff. To him she was in a great measure indebted for the throne; and the attentions which, immediately subsequent to the revolution, she lavished on him, seemed merely the natural expression of gratitude. But her women, and some of her courtiers, knew that there was much beyond this; that she had given birth to a daughter of which he was the father. Had, however, this fact been generally

known, he would not have been so zealously assisted by the conspirators. His favour was beheld with envy, and intrigues were busy to effect his disgrace; but during many years they failed. So great was the attachment of the czarina, that she at one time, we are told, seriously intended to marry him, but not to associate him with her in the government of the empire. Her ambition was superior to every other passion. Yet, for a time, she was strangely influenced by the reigning favourite, whom she sometimes permitted to abuse the laws and the administration. At other times, the sovereign prevailed over the woman; and, in the disputes so frequent between the lover and the chief minister, she generally took part with the latter. In 1772, the haughtiness of Orloff, who, at her request, had been created by the emperor Joseph prince of the holy Roman empire, led to his dismissal, and his place was supplied by another. Potemkin, whose name is so famous in Russian history, was the third. The influence of this nobleman was so much the greater, as he combined within himself the twofold post of favourite and minister. His history, during a considerable portion of Catherine's reign, is that of Russia. Even when removed from the former, he retained the latter post, and with it his influence. — But we will not proceed with this subject: it is too gross for relation. Suffice it to add, that this abandoned woman installed twelve individuals, one after another, in the despicable post; and that they, numerous as they were, were not one tenth of the number she admitted to the last familiarities. Female chastity has never been in much esteem at this most profligate of courts: compared with it, the French court under the old régime was one of purity. Worontzof is not the only instance of a nobleman abandoning both wife and daughter to the basest and most wicked of purposes. The moral turpitude of Russia, the most unprincipled country on the face of the earth, is more to be feared than its

physical strength. It has poisoned the higher classes of European society; and its fatal influence is, we fear, every day extending.

Another of the czarina's defects was her unequalled selfishness. In the pursuit of her own gratifications, she wasted, in the most lavish, the most incredible manner, the treasures supplied by the groans, the toil, the misery of the people. If whole provinces were famishing; if the plague was carrying away thousands, whom a supply of life's necessaries might have restored; she had no money for them. But if some idle display was to be made; if triumphal arches, gewgaw palaces, and other fooleries, were to be exhibited; there was no lack of the necessary means. Her progress into the Ukraine, every step of which was remarkable for expensive devices, — now a tower rising in the midst of a desert, to disappear the following day; now a palace rearing its towers above the surrounding waste, to be removed in a few hours; now gardens, where nature had stamped perpetual sterility, smiling for a moment only, to be replaced by the boundless sand, — cost the nation more than would have sufficed to maintain the poor of a whole kingdom. When we read of the splendid presents she was in the habit of making, her ostentatious liberality, her insane profusion, we are too apt to forget the misery which supported the glittering pomp. The empire was, indeed, a bright, a glorious figure when seen from afar; but when nearly viewed, it was disproportionate: if the exterior was all gold, the inside was all iron. The empress had no feeling for others, no affection of heart, no principle of morals or of religion. Her lust — her thirst for blood — her heartless selfishness — her profound sensuality — her deep hypocrisy — her infidelity — assuredly render her one of the most detestable sovereigns in all history.

1767. 2. That, in her internal administration, Catherine conferred some benefits on the empire, cannot be denied. In the first place, she had some small pretensions to the character of a legislator. We have already seen that, in

the fourteenth century, Ivan Vassilievitch gave the Russians a code of laws. As it was become superannuated, and little adapted to a more advanced state of society, Alexis, in the seventeenth, made it the foundation of another. Peter I. added to the number of laws; and the ukases of succeeding czars increased the bulk, without method or system: in fact, the laws were a complete chaos, which no acuteness, no patience, could comprehend. There was, indeed, little need for the comprehension, as appeals, in the more important cases, were carried to the senate; and the senate decided by corruption, and the emperor by caprice. Of what use were defined laws, when none of them would have been regarded, if contrary to the views or humour of the superior tribunal? There was, however, much contradiction to be reconciled, many relics of barbarism to be removed, many additions to be made, many alterations to be introduced, so as to place Russian legislation on a level with the state of society: above all, there wanted system. The ambition of Catherine was excited; and deputies from the whole empire were summoned to meet at Moscow to receive her instructions on the subject. Misled by the (so called) philosophy of the nation she so much admired, she was at no pains to consider whether the institutions she established were adapted to the character, genius, habits, and manners of the people. It was her aim — an aim sufficiently natural in a despot — to adapt the people to the institutions, not the institutions to the people. Penalties extracted from Montesquieu and other *philosophes* were, surely, little calculated for the Russians. Some brilliant, and even just, common-places on the fundamental principles of society, and on the relation of punishment to crime, were not for barbarians. The boyard, who beheld in his boor an animal of about the same dignity as his ox or his horse, was not likely to appreciate the abstract notions of this female philosopher. There was something, too, rather grotesque in these elaborate de-

finitions of liberty by the most despotic authority in the universe. If a barbarous code be inapplicable to a people who have reached the acme of social improvement, the converse of the proposition is equally true. Well does a modern writer* observe, "These institutions, so beautiful in theory, have been very pernicious in practice. The reason is, that Russia was not ripe for them; that the elect of the people, whether judicial or municipal authority, were unable to discharge the functions confided to them; that they who received a limited power were anxious to render it unlimited; that no punishment was inflicted on the violators of the law; that the law appeared to have been enacted only to authorise abuses; that the empress, who only reserved to herself the quality of supreme directress of the empire, directed nothing, or, if she did, it was with a hand so feeble, that she appeared to have exhausted herself in the effort of creating, — to have no strength left for guiding that creation; or, rather, she herself was not merely guided, but imperiously commanded, by her favourites." The imperial lieutenants whom she established had little notion of the philosophic equity which she professed to admire. Accustomed to regard themselves rather as petty sovereigns than as functionaries, the fines which they inflicted they turned into their own coffers, for the augmentation of their private fortunes. The forms of jurisdiction were equally defective: they were numerous and complicated; yet the result was not likely to be satisfactory, when we consider that, in accordance with an ancient law, the tribunals which received appeals were not allowed to use a single paper, to interrogate a single witness, that had not previously been laid before the tribunal of the first instance. Hence the superior judges — those even whose decisions were in the last resort — could not be more enlightened than those in the lowest scale of administration. We may add that the functionaries

* M. Levesque.

chosen were worse than the system. Elected by the inhabitants of the towns, and remunerated by a very small stipend, they were often ignorant, generally venal. Many of them were men who had purchased their freedom, or been voluntarily enfranchised; and they brought into the administration of the law the spirit, the habits, and manners of slavery.

In some other respects, the institutions of this empress were more salutary. Knowing, as she did from her own personal character, the dissolute conduct of the Russian females, and the alarming consequences which it frequently produced, she established in every large city a foundling hospital, whither pregnant women might at any time resort, and where the offspring of her guilt was sure to be reared by the state. If this was a humane, it was also a dangerous regulation, since its direct, immediate tendency was the increase of vice.

An academy of fine arts had been founded by Elizabeth; but on a scale far from commensurate with the importance of the object. Catherine undertook to enlarge it. She raised the number of students to 250, divided into five classes. They who made a certain degree of proficiency were enabled, during three years, to travel in foreign countries, and thereby study the best models.

Still more useful was an academy for the education of 200 young ladies of noble birth. The czarina knew how much depends on the *mother*, and she resolved that her rude, ignorant, barbarous nobility, should have the means of gradual civilisation. The students formed a sort of community under the superintendence of a widow, whose husband must have held the rank, at least, of a general officer. Most of the governesses were necessarily foreigners: there were distinct masters for each of the European languages, and for the sciences best adapted to a woman's station in life. Besides these young ladies, the same establishment admitted an equal number of citizens' daughters to advantages scarcely inferior.

But as Russia was, and is, essentially a military nation, the education of the officers was the first and most important of the czarina's objects. As early as 1731, Anne had founded a college of cadets, which had produced some good officers, and even statesmen; but when Catherine ascended the throne it was in great decline. She greatly extended it, and in other respects improved it. She rendered it capable of admitting 700 boys, who received an education at once solid and accomplished. No expense was spared in their instruction: the foreign languages, most arts and sciences, especially those connected directly or indirectly with the military profession, were embraced by it; and, to rouse emulation, a pension of 600 roubles, for the purpose of foreign travel, was granted to such as most distinguished themselves. On their return, or immediately afterwards, all were sure of commissions. The education was military as well as scholastic; their exercise was daily; and, in summer, most of their time was passed in the camps prepared for them, yet without intermission of study.

Besides this college of cadets for the army in general, Catherine either founded or enlarged three others, — one for the education of naval, one for that of artillery, one for that of Greek, officers. The last of these establishments was designed for the sons of the Greeks who fled from the oppression of the Turks. It was a politic measure: it gave many excellent officers to Greece; and, what was of far greater moment, it returned them to that country with a strong feeling of attachment towards Russia.

But even education is insufficient to ensure a devoted, an able, and a loyal soldiery: there must also be the prospect of reward. Independent of the system of promotion, which is as liberal in the armies of Russia as in those of any other country, with the single exception of Prussia, she instituted a military order, — that of St. George, — which distributed not only honours, but pensions, to bravery and merit. In the same view she founded the order of St. Vladomir, for the recom-

pense of such as distinguished themselves in a civil career.

Nothing can better evince the anxiety of the princess for the improvement of Russia, than her conduct in regard to the introduction of inoculation for the small-pox. That disorder, so fatal where the means of art were unknown or despised, had made dreadful ravages among the beauties of the court, had consigned some of her own connections to the tomb, and was dreaded by herself. With some difficulty she prevailed on a few of her nobles to undergo the operation, and she herself resolved to give the example. An English physician was specially invited to exercise his art on the empress and the grand-duke Paul. He acquitted himself of the task,—an adventurous one at that day, both to himself and them,—in such a manner as to call forth the unbounded approbation of Catherine. The dignity of baron, with a gift of 10,000*l.*, and a pension of 500*l.* per annum for life in his own country, was certainly a munificent reward. The example of the imperial family was followed by many courtiers, many nobles; and inoculation,—the most admirable of modern arts,—was soon introduced into the public hospitals.

If the knowledge of this empress was superficial, she had at least the quality which should distinguish all sovereigns,—a taste for knowledge, and a desire to see it generally diffused. To ascertain the geography, the geology, the agriculture, and the statistics of her empire, she requested the Academy of Sciences to despatch able men into the different provinces to make their observations. The instructions written for their guidance were judicious; and the result was a most valuable body of information, which has laid open to the world the natural and physical resources of the empire. All the sciences she was eager to patronise; and eminent men from all parts of Europe were invited to reside in her metropolis. Thus Euler, the celebrated mathematician, found not merely affluence, but splendour, in that city.

She was, indeed, alive to the necessity of exciting a taste for such pursuits among her people: hence the privileges she extended to the Academy of Sciences, and to that of Arts.

The encouragement which Catherine extended to literature was not indeed equal to that which she showed to science, because science was a more urgent desideratum, but it was greater than was exhibited by any other sovereign in Europe. Her letter to D'Alembert, in return for the philosopher's refusal to undertake the education of her son, sufficiently evinces her anxiety on this subject.* Her correspondence with Voltaire exhibits equal candour. Nor was she backward to relieve the embarrassments of literary men. Hearing that Diderôt was so reduced in circumstances as to meditate the sale of his library, she bought it; but, with a delicacy of which there is no other instance among crowned heads, she suffered it to remain with its owner, and appointed him her librarian, with a salary. Many other literary men, both of France and of Germany, received tokens of her admiration. But, unfortunately, it was generally confined to avowed infidels. The fact that she was not merely willing, but eager, to entrust the education of her son to men of such principles, sufficiently proves the looseness of *her* opinions on the momentous subject of religion.

But the empress, not merely encouraged, she also practised literature. Her knowledge, as we have before observed, was small; it was rather information than knowledge; it was crude, indigested, without system or principles. Of the elementary treatises which she wrote for the use of her grand-children; of the comedies which were intended for the gratification of her court; and of the history of her own time which she left unfinished, we shall only say, that, had they been worth much, they would assuredly have been pre-

* See Appendix B.

served. Judging from her correspondence, and from other extant productions of her pen, we see little reason to regret their passage to oblivion. The praise to which she is really entitled, is that of encouraging intellectual pursuits in others.

Whatever might in this respect be the merit of Catherine, she did not forget that the useful arts demanded her first care. Of these agriculture was the chief; and the advantages which she held out to practical farmers in all countries is the best evidence of her enlightened policy. If this measure, — if the colonies which she was enabled to establish in desert or uninhabited regions, — did not produce the full benefit which might have been expected from it, the fault was not hers, but that of the ministry, and of the inferior agents of government. After all, the best instruments of the improvement she meditated were her own subjects. The prospect of a certain portion of land at the end of a certain period of service, military or civil, was an inducement to good behaviour; the certainty that this property would descend to the heirs of the owner, naturally led to its cultivation.

But though agriculture was the first, it was not the only art to the encouragement of which the empress applied her attention. Architecture, especially the domestic, occupied much of her thoughts. The towns which she rebuilt, or greatly enlarged, were numerous. Still more agreeable was the sight of new cities in regions which had previously seen no other habitations than the tents of the vagabond tribes. She had a prize for every invention, for every improvement, not merely in this, but in every other useful art. If her bounty was not more frequently experienced; if, through the encouragement designed for them, these arts did not flourish so much as might have been wished, the blame was attributable to the underlings of government, or to the apathy of the ministry. The case, we believe, is still the same in that extraordinary empire.

It may, indeed, be observed, that in all her improvements, in all her designs, patriotism had less influence over this princess than vanity. This is a truth which no sophistry can shake. In her moral composition, she had a great desire for *éclat:* she wished to be the idol of the world, especially of the philosophic world. All her thoughts, all her deeds, had immediate reference to *self.* But where benefits have been conferred by the great, mankind should acknowledge them, and even be grateful for them. With all her defects — and no sovereign had ever greater — she was, beyond all controversy, a benefactor to Russia. As such, notwithstanding her private and even public vices, she is, and ever will be, esteemed in that country. Though the impetus which she gave to the national progress was often misdirected, still some praise must be given to one that succeeded in reviving its slumbering energies.

3. But the foreign policy of Russia, under the reign of this empress, is the subject most deserving of our consideration. We shall consider it in reference, not to strict chronological order, but to the countries which called it forth.

1762 to 1763. *Poland.*—Having made peace with Denmark, the object of Peter's contemplated hostility, and ratified that with Prussia, Catherine was for some months after her accession occupied with her internal administration. It was her interest to be at peace with the great princes of Europe, since any one of them had the power to shake her throne. Had Sweden, or Denmark, or Prussia, sent a few thousand men to aid the cause of Ivan, she must have retired to private life. Hence the moderation which signalised the first two or three years of her reign. But Poland was a kingdom which, ever since the time of Peter I., Russia had been taught to regard as a dependency. The two last kings had been elected through her interest; and Catherine had resolved that her old lover, count Stanislaus Poniatowski, should next fill the throne. She was the more en-

couraged in this purpose, as she knew Frederic of Prussia — a monarch as ambitious as herself — would not oppose it; and of the Austrian empress she had no dread. Indeed, as both sovereigns were anxious to secure her alliance, she was placed in a position more favourable than any of her predecessors. The death of Augustus III. (1763), king of the country, enabled her to gratify at once her views both as a sovereign and a woman. To choose the new ruler was to preserve the influence of her empire: to raise a lover to that dignity was to gratify her female pride. As she had anticipated, Prussia was ready to act with her. If she at first proceeded with caution, her purpose was not the less firm. Her ambassador at Warsaw was instructed to say that, as an old ally, she was ready to defend the integrity of the republic; but then he insinuated, as if from his own authority, that a Piast, viz., a native candidate, would be agreeable to her. Who that Piast could be, there was little difficulty in surmising. Stanislaus, aided by his relatives the Czartorinskis, had long been plotting for the dignity; and a considerable number of electors had been gained. The election was a farce. To enforce the choice of Stanislaus, 40,000 Prussians moved, at the desire of Catherine, into Silesia; and Catherine sent 10,000 for the same object to Warsaw itself. There was no longer even the shadow of national independence; and the bayonets of the czarina raised Stanislaus to the throne.

To suppose that in this interference the empress was 1763
actuated by the slightest personal attachment to Stanis- to
laus would be erroneous. New favourites had long 1772.
banished *him* from her mind. Her object was purely one of ambition, — a determination to retain Poland in dependence on Russia until the whole, or a portion of the country, became incorporated with that empire. With this purpose in view, she perpetually swayed the king and diet; opposed whatever measures were likely to secure the existence of the republic; and supported

such as must render it dependent on its powerful neighbour. Her lover was made to feel that he was a crowned vassal; the nation, that its existence was a continued act of sufferance by Catherine. The fault, indeed, was in themselves. By that strangest of all constitutions, any party which differed from the rest might *confederate*, that is, its members might appear in arms to force its objects; and, if unequal to the trial of physical strength, it might invoke the assistance of a neighbouring power. As foreigners were thus not merely allowed, but *invited*, to interfere in the internal affairs of the republic, how could the national independence be long sustained? how could the integrity of the country long be expected? The partition of Poland is known to every one; the causes which led to it are not so thoroughly examined. The proposal originated with that "philosophic" monarch, Frederic of Prussia, who despatched his brother, prince Henry (1770), to arrange the leading conditions with "his philosophic sister." The gorgeous splendour which marked the reception of the royal guest, — the triumphal arches, the artificial volcanoes, the nocturnal passage from one palace to another, amidst a glare of light that well compensated for the absence of the sun, — the sumptuous entertainments, — were but a veil to conceal from Europe the real object of the journey. The only apprehension was how far the great European powers might take part with Poland. Austria especially was to be dreaded, both from her contiguity and from her physical preponderance. The subject demanded consideration: it was easy for Frederic and Catherine to agree as to their respective shares in the contemplated spoliation, and to guarantee those shares to each other; and this appears to have been the sole design of prince Henry's visit. But time was required to mature the details; and, after the lapse of a few months, it was resolved to allow Austria a third share, as the condition of her aid. This Catherine had foreseen from the first. Her ad-

monition to the royal agent in this deed of iniquity was, — "Gain Austria, and let her amuse France. England I will flatter: Turkey I will frighten!" The emperor Joseph, a philosopher too, immediately found that, as it was the duty of a monarch to promote the happiness of the greatest number, so duty compelled him to obtain as many more subjects as he could. During the two years which intervened between this visit and the treaty of partition, Catherine was employed in "frightening the Turks:" some victories over them rendered her safe against hostilities from them. How far the period was employed in "flattering England," that is, in deceiving it, we have no means of ascertaining; but, considering the utter incompetency of the ministries which succeeded each other during the earlier half of the third George's reign, we need not infer that task was one of much difficulty. Nor was there much in "amusing France."

By the treaty of St. Petersburg (signed August 5. 177
1772), the palatinates of Malborg, Pomerania, Warmia, Culm (except Dantzic and Thorn), and part of Great Poland, were ceded to Prussia. Austria had Galicia, Sandomir, Cracow, and part of Podolia. Russia had Polotsk, Witepsk, Mcislaf, and Polish Livonia. The next point was to execute the treaty. A pretext could not long be wanting for the armed interference of all the three powers: each had been expressly invited by some one of the parties which divided that unhappy country, which were perpetually engaged in civil war. The three bandit chiefs despatched armies into Poland, and Europe waited with much anxiety the issue of this step. Its suspense was not of long continuance: the treaty of Petersburg was presented to the Polish king and senate; and manifestoes, stating the pretensions of each power, were published. Never were documents so insulting laid before rational men. King and senate could oppose little resistance to demands so powerfully supported; but their consent alone could not sanction

the dismemberment of the republic. Hence the diet was convoked. Many of the deputies refused to attend; as they knew that all deliberation amidst foreign bayonets must be a farce. Many did assemble, — a few to oppose the act, the majority to approve it. That eight or ten members only should resist the destruction of their country, that all the rest should tamely sanction it, might appear incredible, if it were not matter of history. But few are, or ever have been, the Poles who have preferred the national to their individual interests. Most of the members were bribed by the ambassadors of the three plunderers.

1773. In this monstrous robbery the lion's share fell to Russia. She acquired an extent of territory estimated at 3440 square leagues, with one million and a half of inhabitants: Austria had 2700 leagues, but a greater population, viz. two millions and a half: Prussia had scarcely 1000 square leagues, and less than a million of people. But Frederic had no reason to be dissatisfied with *his* portion: if it was the smallest and least populous, it was also the richest and the most enterprising, because the most commercial. The number of inhabitants, where there must necessarily be much disaffection, was no great object: the extent, the fertility, and the contiguity of the acquisitions, were the most valuable considerations; and in all these respects Russia had certainly the best share.

1792 to 1793. As the three co-robbers were so courageous as to set at defiance both justice and public opinion, so magnanimous as to show themselves in their real character to all posterity, it may appear matter of surprise that they did not seize on the *whole* of the kingdom. But though they had resolved to seize the remainder, they were cautious enough to wait the course of events; to take advantage of any favourable circumstance that might arise. The French revolution furnished them with it. That event had many admirers in Poland, many who wished to imitate it at home. It was easy

for the three neighbouring powers to take umbrage at the progress of republican opinions; to assert, as indeed truth authorised them to assert, that the Poles were in communication with the heads of the movement in Paris. In reality, in the year 1791 a new constitution was proclaimed, exceedingly like a republic: the authority of the Polish kings had always been too limited for the purposes of executive government; it was now annihilated. In the present, as in the former instance, Prussia took the lead in the career of spoliation. She suddenly professed great regard for the republic; was resolved to assist in restoring internal peace, and preventing foreign aggression; and with this philanthropic declaration, her troops were passed over the frontier. The mask was not long worn. The reduction of Dantzic and Thorn, the two most important possessions in the north of Europe, convinced the Poles that they had been duped. Catherine was not a woman to let others derive the sole advantage where any thing was to be gained. Preparatory to active operations, she declared war against Poland. The diet resolved to resist; but, as usual, the Poles were divided among themselves. One party declared for Russia; and though the greater number declared for independence, they could not be brought to combine. Success after success was obtained by the Russian general; the empress negotiated the details of another partition with Prussia; and the king and diet were, as before, compelled to sanction it. By it the Russian frontier was extended to the centre of Lithuania and Volhynia; while the remainder of Great, and a part of Little Poland, were ceded to Frederic William. Much to the honour of Austria, she had no hand in this second iniquity.

The territory of the republic was now reduced to about 4000 square miles; and her army, by command of the czarina, was in future not to exceed 15,000 men. The Poles were never deficient in bravery; and though the majority of them have been always accessible to corruption, they were, on this occasion, sensitive to the

1793 to 1795.

national shame. They felt that the narrow limits still allowed them would soon be passed, and that their remaining provinces were intended soon to be incorporated with the neighbouring states. A general insurrection was organised; an army voluntarily arose; and Kosciusko placed himself at its head. For a time wonders were wrought by the patriots: though opposed by two great enemies, — those of Russia and Prussia, — they expelled the enemy from most of the fortresses; and even when Austria acceded to the coalition and took Cracow, they were not desponding. To effect impossibilities, however, was an absurd attempt: the majority felt it to be so, and they sullenly received the foreign law. Kosciusko was made prisoner; the last outworks of the last fortress were reduced; Warsaw capitulated; Stanislaus was deposed; and a third partition ended the existence of the Polish republic. By it Austria had Cracow, with the country between the Pilitza, the Vistula, and the Bug. Prussia had Warsaw, with the territory to the banks of the Niemen. The rest, which, as usual, was the lion's share, fell to Russia.

The iniquity of these partitions is fully equalled by the folly. The barrier hitherto offered to Russian aggression was thrown down; and the road to Berlin and Vienna lies as open as that from Moscow to Bender. How this obvious consideration should have escaped the two German powers; how they were so short-sighted as not to combine for the defence, instead of the destruction, of that barrier, is inexplicable. It can only be explained at best on the old axiom, — that states, like individuals, are sometimes blinded, that they may proceed to their own destruction.

1768. *Turkey.* — The wars with this power occupied a considerable portion of Catherine's reign; yet they were not originally sought by her. The Porte, at the suggestion of the French ambassador, whose master was anxious to divert her from her meditated encroachments on Poland, was, unfortunately for itself, induced to de-

clare war against her. The Grand Seignior, indeed, was the ally of the republic; and he was one of the parties to guarantee its independence. But his dominions were not tranquil; the discipline of his armies was impaired, while that of the Russians was improving every day. Perhaps, however, he was ignorant of the disadvantages which must attend the prosecution of the war: certainly his pride was flattered by the insinuation that he held in his hands the balance of power in eastern and northern Europe. In 1769 hostilities commenced by the invasion of the Crimea, the khan of which was the vassal of the Porte. Azof and Taganrog were soon taken; Moldavia was entered; Servia was cleared of the Tartar allies. Before Kotzim, however, prince Gallitzin received a check, and was forced to repass the Dniester. A second attempt on that important fortress was equally unsuccessful. But the Turks, who pursued too far, were vanquished in some isolated engagement; and the campaign of 1769 ended by the acquisition of Kotzim.

The operations of the following year were much more decisive. Gallitzin, disgusted by the arrogance of the favourite Orloff, resigned the command into abler hands than even his own, — those of count Romanzof. The reduction of Jassy and Brailof was preparatory to two great victories, which rendered the name of Romanzof for ever memorable in the annals of his country. The first was on the banks of the Pruth. The Turks, in number 80,000, under the khan of the Crimea, were entrenched on a hill, in a position too strong to be assailed. But after three weeks, they became wearied of their inactivity; and believing, from a feint of the Russian general, that he was about to retire, 20,000 of them rushed down the hill. They were repulsed with terrible loss; the remainder carried dismay into the camp; and the Russians, taking advantage of the circumstances, ascended, forced the entrenchments, killed many, compelled the rest to flee, and seized considerable booty, with thirty-eight pieces of cannon. Re-

treating towards the Danube, the Turks effected a junction with the grand vizir, whose army was thereby increased to 150,000. Unaware of its extent, Romanzof pursued with ardour, and was suddenly in the presence of his formidable competitor. His position was a critical one. The vizir was entrenched; and the khan, resolved to efface the shame of his recent defeat, wheeled round his left flank, and encamped behind him. Hence he could not move backwards or forwards. On the following day, the vizir gave the signal of battle; and the contest raged for some hours with desperate fury. Annoyed at the perpetual discharges of the enemy's artillery, which alarmingly thinned his ranks, the count ordered his men to fix their bayonets, and rush on the entrenchments. Here the struggle was more deadly than before; but in the end numbers yielded to discipline and valour. The Turks fled, the vizir with them, leaving immense stores (among which were 143 pieces of cannon) in the power of the victors, and nearly one-third of their number on the field. Romanzof now crossed the Dniester; one of his generals, Repnin, reduced Ismailof; the other, Panin, took the most important fortress, Bender, after a siege of three months; while a detachment from the main army seized the capital of Bessarabia.

Nor were these the only successes of the year. Not satisfied with warfare on land, Catherine resolved to try her fortunes on the deep; and to do what none of her predecessors had ever dreamed, — to send a powerful fleet into the Mediterranean, for the purpose of assailing her enemy in Greece. Many new ships were built; many English naval officers persuaded to command them, and to teach her seamen the arts by which the superiority of England had been so long maintained. The Greeks were impatient for the arrival of their co-religionists; the czarina's gold had gained over the chiefs, and a general insurrection of the people was meditated. Her designs were truly gigantic, — no less than to drive the Mohammedans from Europe. The

fleet sailed, arrived in the Archipelago, disembarked both on the islands and the continent; and while the Turkish possessions were assailed on the Danube, they were equally perilled in these southern latitudes. A terrible warfare now commenced, — the Greeks every where butchering the Mohammedans, the latter retaliating. A naval battle was inevitable; the hostile fleets met between Scio and Natolia: the engagement continued until night, to the manifest advantage of the Russians. That very night, the Turkish admiral was so foolish as to run his ships into a narrow bay, in which he was instantly blockaded. Some fire-ships, sent by vice-admiral Elphinstone, a Scotchman in the service of the empress, set all of them on fire; and at sunrise the following morning, not a flag was to be seen. This blow sensibly affected the Turks, especially as the appearance of the Russians in the Mediterranean had encouraged Tripoli, Egypt, and Syria to rebel against the Porte. Ali-bey, the governor of Egypt, an able, ambitious, and enterprising insurgent, was ready to assist his allies with all his might; but the incapacity, yet egregious haughtiness of the Russian admiral, Alexis Orloff, prevented them from deriving much advantage from the union. The year, however, was one of brilliant success; and Catherine was so elated that she built a magnificent palace, which she called after the bay in which the last victory was gained.

In the spring of 1771, Orloff again resorted to the 1771. Mediterranean, where the Russian fleet still lay, with the intention of forcing the Dardanelles; while the armies on the Danube renewed their operations. The position of Turkey was, indeed, critical: not only was one half of the empire in revolt, but the plague had alarmingly thinned the population. Fortunately, however, for this power, the same scourge found its way into the heart of Russia: its ravages were as fatal at Moscow as at Constantinople; and it no more spared the Christians on the Danube than it did the Moham-

medans. This calamity slackened, but did not suspend operations. If the Russians were sometimes repulsed, the balance of success was decidedly in their favour. The famous lines of Perekop, from the Euxine to the Sea of Azof, were forced by prince Dolgorunki, though they were defended by 50,000 Tartars; the whole of the Crimea, one fortress excepted, was subdued; and the surname of Krimski, or Conqueror of the Crimea, was given to the victor. The country, however, was not incorporated with the empire: on the contrary, while it was declared independent of the Porte, it was proclaimed as merely under the protection of Russia. The khan, Selim Gherei, being thus expelled, proceeded to Constantinople, where he died. The exertions of the fleet, however, did not correspond with those of the land forces: all that Orloff effected was to destroy the Turkish commerce on the Levant.

1772, During the year 1772 no hostilities were committed,
1773. and negotiations for peace were undertaken. Though the two contracting parties, which sent their representatives to Bucharest, could not agree on the conditions, both were anxious to recruit their strength, after the heavy losses they had sustained both by the sword and the plague. Catherine too had another motive for temporary inaction; she was busily effecting the first partition of Poland.* With the return of the following spring, however, the banks of the Danube were again the theatre of war; but this campaign was not destined to be so glorious as the one of 1771. Its opening was unfavourable for the Russians: while a body of 14,000, under prince Repnin, were crossing that river, they were surprised by one of the Turkish generals; many perished; about 600, with the prince himself, were made prisoners and sent to Constantinople. Shortly afterwards, Romanzof, who had passed that river, and was marching on Silistria, was compelled to retrace his steps. At Roskana a considerable body of his troops was defeated by the vizier. This harassing warfare

* See page 279 suprà.

— for the Turks carefully avoided a *general* action — thinned the ranks, and, what is worse, depressed the spirits, of the invaders. Romanzof was no less averse to such a risk. Nor did the fleet in the Mediterranean effect any thing to counterbalance their indecisive yet destructive operations. What little advantage there was, belonged to the Turks.

The campaign of 1774 promised to be more important 1774.
than the preceding; and the Porte, from the rebellion of Pugatschef, was confident of success. Several actions on the Danube, which, however bravely contested, led to no result, were yet considered as indicative of a severe if not a decisive struggle. But the anticipation was groundless. Though several bodies of Tartars, who were to effect a diversion in favour of Pugatschef, were defeated; though the Danube was crossed; though 25,000 of the Turks were repulsed by Soltikof, and another body still stronger by Suwarrof; though the vizier himself was blockaded in Shumla, — Europe was disappointed in its expectations; for negotiations were opened for a peace, which was soon concluded. By the treaty of Kainardski, Russia obtained the free navigation of the Black Sea, the right of passage through the Danube, a large tract of land between the Bug and the Dnieper, with the strong fortresses of Azof, Taganrog, Kertsh, and Kinburn. The rest of the Crimea was ceded, — not, indeed, to the Turks, but to its own khan, who, though declared independent, must of necessity be the creature of the empress, in whose hands those fortresses remained. They were the keys to his dominions, and even to the command of the Black Sea. A sum of money sufficient to defray the expenses of the war was also stipulated; but it was never paid. The advantages which Russia derived from the other articles were ample enough: among them, not the least, was the commerce of the Levant and of the Black Sea.

During this war, the insurrection of the Cossacs was not the only event that retarded the operations of the

Russians. It had, indeed, been preceded by the emigration of a vast Tartar tribe, which, unwilling to suffer any longer the odious domination of the Europeans, had passed into the other extremity of Asia. They were a branch of the great Mongolian nation, and had been settled in Western Asia no longer than from the opening of the eighteenth century. At that time about 400,000 of them, dissatisfied with the domination of Thibert, besought the protection of Russia, and were allowed to settle on the banks of the Volga, in the vast steppes of Astracan. Here, occupied in their pastoral labours, especially in the rearing of sheep, of which they had an infinite number, they engaged in commerce with the neighbouring tribes, and were great benefactors to these regions. But they had soon reason to be discontented with the domination of the Russians, who treated them with contempt, who harassed them by exactions, who irritated them by a succession of annoyances. To them independence was the dearest of blessings; and during the silence of night, under the guidance of their khan, they returned to the regions from which they had originally migrated.*

1771. In the year which witnessed the retreat of so peaceful a tribe, a circumstance occurred that must for ever cover with shame the memory not only of Catherine, but of her instrument, Alexis Orloff. As, however, we have no room for it in the text, and as some of the details may, for any thing we know, be apocryphal — as they are derived from popular rumour, — we consign it to the Appendix.†

1776 to 1779. A peace of some years followed the treaty of Kainarji, if, indeed, that can be called peace where the most solemn engagements are perpetually evaded. On that treaty Catherine put what interpretation she pleased. In two other respects she ran counter to its spirit. First, she offered her protection to the voivods of Wallachia and Moldavia, who, in consequence, were her vassals rather than those of the Porte. The Christians on the

* See Appendix C. † See Appendix D.

opposite bank of the Danube were in correspondence with Russia; they were encouraged to revolt, to claim her protection, to oppose the Turkish government in every way. Nay, she carried her insulting faithlessness so far, as to insist that in future no voivod should be deposed by the divan. Secondly, though the Crimea had been declared independent, she proved that the word had reference merely to the authority of the sultan, and not to hers; and, by the foundation of towns, the establishment of rural colonies in the neighbourhood, and even in the Crimea itself, she sufficiently evinced her ultimate purpose. More than once, we may add, the Russian troops appeared in that peninsula. In 1776 they deposed the reigning khan, and elected in his stead another, who was easily induced to solicit the protection of the empress. Turkey threatened to resume the war; and the threat would doubtless have been executed, had not prince Repnin been sent to Constantinople to calm, for a time, the resentment of the sultan. Two years afterwards, indeed, when the extent of Catherine's encroachments was better understood, war was again resolved; but it was averted by the interference of the French ambassador at Constantinople. A third time the harmony was broken by the actual seizure of the Crimea, in despite, too, of the recent promise of neutrality; and the very populace were so indignant that they clamoured for war. Never has Russia been faithful to her engagements: at this period, and, indeed, throughout the reign of this empress, she acted as if honour and truth were but empty sounds, — useful, perhaps, in the private relations of life, but wholly inadmissible into the policy of civilised governments. At length, through the efforts of the same ambassador, a new treaty, or rather a modification of the former, was signed at Constantinople in 1779. In it Russia promised to desist from some of her obnoxious pretensions in regard both to the two principalities and the Crimea; but promises cost little, and she had no intention of fulfilling any one of them.

1781 to 1784. If a reconciliation between the two powers was thus forced, it was not likely to be permanent. Almost every year brought new complaints and evasions. The foundation of the city of Cherson, about ten leagues from Otzakof, gave peculiar umbrage to the Porte. This place had now a population of 40,000; and the number of warlike vessels constructed in its arsenal were evidently intended to overawe Constantinople. In 1783 another insulting message was sent to the Turkish ministers, — that, let the conduct of the empress in regard to the Crimea be whatever it might, they should not interfere. At the same time she prevailed on the khan whom she had supported, Sahim Gherei, to make the most outrageous demands from the Porte. The khan's envoy was beheaded. Under the pretext of punishing the Turks for this insult to their "good ally," the Russians requested permission to march through his territory. It was immediately granted; but no sooner were they in the peninsula than, instead of proceeding against the Turkish fortifications on the island of Taman, they seized the towns, forced the Mohammedan authorities, in the khan's presence, to take the oath of allegiance to the empress, and seized on the revenues of the country. In return, they promised him a pension, equal to about one fourth of what he had been in the habit of receiving. At the same time, as if resolved to see how far the patience of Turkey might be tempted, they seized Kuban and Budzich, threatened Otzakof, and indeed the whole frontier as far east as the Caucasus. They had forced the Soloman of Mingrelia, and Heraclius of Georgia, to declare themselves vassals of Russia. The empress had expressly declared that the Caucasus must, in future, be the boundary of her possessions; but when she found that the Georgians, like all mountaineers, were hostile to a foreign domination, then she determined that the Caucasian range should be included in her empire, and her frontier extended considerably to the south. One reason for this insulting conduct doubtless was the alli-

ance which Catherine had concluded with Austria, and the obligation of both to assist each other in the spoliation of Turkey, just as they had already combined in the spoliation of Poland. In virtue of this alliance the khan (it is useful to see by what steps the aggressions were made) was *now* forced to resign his authority, and transfer it to Catherine: in return he received some estates in Russia. A manifesto declared that the Crimea, Kuban, and Taman were for ever incorporated with the empire. In a document of some length, and of great force, the Turkish ministry exposed to the world the unprincipled encroachments of their neighbours; but, where justice had appealed in vain, a mere public writing was of little avail. Instead of blushing for her faithlessness, Russia exhibited enormous activity in preparing for new aggressions. Three great armies met on the frontiers: 70,000 men, under Potemkin, were in the Crimea; 40,000, under Repnin, were ready to co-operate with him; and a third army, under Romanzof, assembled at Kief; while two formidable fleets — one in the Euxine, another in the Baltic — were prepared for action. The Porte, terrified at this menacing display, listened to the advice of France and Austria; and, by another treaty (signed at Constantinople early in 1784), recognised the sovereignty of the empress over the Crimea, Taman, and a great part of Kuban. To the first and last of these places she restored their ancient classical names, Taurida and Caucasus. — We have been the more minute in specifying these monstrous aggressions, because they have been concealed or palliated by some continental writers, and because the relation may at the present time be instructive.

Equal minuteness cannot be observed in relating the 1785
subsequent dissensions between Russia and the Porte, to
or rather, the systematic, unblushing, unprincipled en- 1787.
croachments of the former power. In short, there was no respite given to the peaceful Tartar and Mohammedan tribes on the shores of the Euxine; and the

Christian principalities south of the Caucasus were harassed in a similar manner. Not one of the engagements into which perfidious Russia entered was observed, or intended to be so. In vain did the despised khan, Sahim Gherai, the most faithful, the most useful ally of that power, claim his pension. In vain did the Tartars, who had been guaranteed in the possession of their property, their freedom, their religious toleration, exclaim against their forcible expulsion from the Chersonesus, and remonstrate against the injustice. Both, as well as the Mohammedan world, were convinced that the meeting of the czarina and Joseph II. at Cherson (1787) augured no good to the cause of Islam. What passed in the interview between the two potentates can only be matter of conjecture; but that it concerned the approaching war with Turkey is undoubted. But their deliberations could little affect the unfortunate khan. Unable to obtain his pension, exiled to Kalouga, reduced to the utmost destitution, he at length resolved to throw himself on the generosity of the Turks, and by them he was massacred. Thus was he repaid for his devotion to Russia, for his confidence in the Mohammedan honour. He is another and one of the most melancholy attestations of the truth that dethroned monarchs have one foot in the tomb. When this measure was adopted, Turkey, assailed by the reproaches of the Mahommedan world, indignant at the perfidy of the enemy, and convinced, by fatal experience, that concessions only tended to renewed usurpations, had resolved on war: it was declared in August, 1787, and the minister of Russia was consigned to the fortress of the Seven Towers.

1787 to 1788. The campaign was opened with ardour. Knowing that Otzakof would be the earliest object of hostility, the sultan sent a considerable force to cover it. Another army marched to the Danube, and the vizier in person took the field. As the Turks had just crushed the Egyptian rebellion, they looked forward to the impending warfare with a hope to which their former

reverses had for some time rendered them strangers. On the other hand, Potemkin, the commander-in-chief, having under his orders some of the best generals in the service, hastened to the frontiers, which were soon covered by Russian troops. At the same time the emperor Joseph sent 80,000 Austrians into Moldavia; while a powerful fleet in the Euxine prepared to co-operate with the allies, and another in the Baltic was ready to sail for the Mediterranean. It seemed, indeed, as if Catherine's favourite dream, the elevation of her grandson Constantine to the throne of the Greek empire, was about to be realised. Yet these mighty preparations had no commensurate effect. An attack on Kinburn by 5000 Turks from the garrison of Otzakof was repulsed with heavy loss. But this advantage was counterbalanced by the dispersion of the Euxine fleet in a storm, with the loss of some vessels. These were the chief events of the first campaign. The second, of 1788, was more decisive. Otzakof was taken by assault, and the garrison put to the sword. At the same time Joseph took Sobach; and his generals captured Soubitza. On the deep, too, fortune was equally adverse to the Turks. Their fleet was defeated in the Euxine; and the capitan-pasha either died of vexation, or was strangled by order of the sultan. The successes of the invaders would, no doubt, have been greater, but for the commencement of hostilities by Sweden. Yet the glory was enough for one campaign.

In the following campaigns the superiority of the Russians was maintained. It would have been still more signal but for the jealousy of Potemkin, who could not tolerate success in any of his generals, and who often sacrificed the interests of his sovereign to this despicable vanity. In great disgust, Romanzof retired from the service: he was tired of fighting under one who attributed all the glory to himself, all the failure to others. The death of Abdul Hamet, and the accession of Selim III., made no difference in the character of the war; it was still adverse to the Turks. Fortress after 1781 to 1791.

fortress was reduced by the enemy; and, though no general engagement was risked, the loss of men was not the less felt.' Suwarof saved the Austrians; Repnin forced the seraskier, Hussein Pasha, to seek refuge in Ismail; Komenski reduced Galatza; Ackerman fell into the power of the Christians; Bender was forced to capitulate. In the following campaign, the important fortress of Ismail was assailed: the siege was conducted by Suwarof, the most dreaded of all the Russian generals. Potemkin, who was present, was more attached to dissipation than to "the iron labours of the field." The garrison was numerous, brave, and the works were strong; and there appeared little hope of reducing the place before the army would be compelled to seek winter quarters. One day, while he was playing at cards with his women, a fair lady began, in jest, to predict the future from the cards which she drew from the pack: "Ismail will be yours in three weeks!"— "I know how it may be gained much sooner," replied the prince; and Suwarof was ordered to take it in three days. It was taken in one, though the loss was most severe; and, in revenge, the garrison, with the greater part of the population, was put to the sword. Other successes followed, both on the banks of the Caspian, and on those of the Danube. Bohada was stormed; at Kotzim 100,000 Turks were defeated by Repnin; Varna was menaced; and the road to Adrianople lay open. The grand vizier now sued for peace, which Catherine was ready to grant, on conditions much less onerous than might have been expected. In the first place, her long-continued efforts to sustain the war against both the Swedes and the Turks, had reduced her to beggary; in the second, Leopold of Austria, whose arms had been less successful, had already signed a separate peace. Besides these considerations, the empress knew that the king of Prussia was intriguing in Poland, and she wished to march an army into that kingdom, to execute the designs which she had so long formed. Had Potemkin lived, — a man who had evidently cast his eyes on a

sovereignty, to be erected on the dismemberment of the Turkish empire, — the task of pacification would have been more difficult; but he died near Jassy. In that place the treaty of peace was signed, January the 9th, 1792. By that treaty, Catherine retained the whole country between the Bog and the Dniester, but restored all the other conquests which she had made since 1787. This was the last of the hostilities between Russia and the Porte during the reign of this empress; and the peace of Jassy enabled her to carry into effect her designs on Poland.

Sweden. — On this power Catherine was not the aggressor. On the contrary, while engaged in vigorous hostilities against the Turks, she first heard that Gustavus was invading Finland. The real motives which induced this prince to enter into a contest with a power so formidable as Russia are not very apparent. He might, indeed, be offended with the arrogance of his neighbour, and with the insolence, the intrigues, the tone of her ambassador at his court; but these were not causes sufficient for a war. Whether he hoped to illustrate his reign by some splendid exploits, and even to reconquer the territories which in the time of Charles XII. had been dismembered from the crown, — Livonia, Esthonia, Ingria, Carelia, and part of Poland, — is doubtful. There can, however, be no doubt that, though he was far from justified in the extreme course he adopted, he had reason enough for dissatisfaction. The ambassador, in accordance with the perfidious system of Russia, had fomented the dissensions between the monarch, the senate, and the people, and endeavoured to restore the old order of things, — an order much less favourable to the authority of the crown than the constitution which had been recently adopted. But the most powerful of the causes which led to the war, were the persuasions of Prussia and England, arising from their design to effect a disunion in favour of Turkey. The one furnished him with money, the other promised him a fleet. The manifesto of the

1788.

king to justify the step, and the conditions which he imposed as the price of peace, were sufficiently absurd: they proved that he had resolved on the struggle, though aware that motives were wanting to justify it.

1788. It commenced by hostilities in Finland, which Gustavus invaded. But they were skirmishes rather than battles; and though the success generally inclined to the invaders, it was scarcely worth the obtaining. The chief reason was, the disaffection of the soldiers themselves, many of whom had probably been gained by Russian gold. They contended, however, that as the king had embarked in the war without the sanction of his states,—an indispensable preliminary,—they could not conscientiously sanction what they felt to be illegal. Some of them absolutely refused to advance against Frederikshain, and were supported in their rebellion by the soldiery. Coupled with this was the failure of the Swedish to arrest the operations of the Russian fleet; on the contrary, it was itself blockaded in the bay of Sweaborg during the rest of the campaign. Nor was this the worst. Denmark, as the ally of Russia, effected a diversion by the invasion of western Sweden. Gustavus raised the siege, re-embarked, proceeded to defend his own kingdom, and threw himself into Gottenburg, which the Danes were besieging. Through the good offices of England, however, a truce was made, the siege raised, and the Danish fleet retired.

1789, 1790. The operations of the following year were not more favourable to Gustavus. He succeeded, indeed, in banishing disaffection from his troops by the punishment of some, by the bribery of others. But his fleet was defeated by the prince of Nassau, then in the service of Russia; soon afterwards his troops were driven from Russian Finland. In vain did the enterprising monarch persevere. In his attempts to re-enter Finland, he was again repulsed; and a second time was his fleet defeated by the same admiral. Blockaded, however, in the Gulf of Wyburg, he valiantly cut his

way through the hostile squadron; and in the ensuing autumn, destroyed a great portion of it. But if he was thus enabled to return with glory into his own parts, his resources were nearly exhausted. His subsequent operations on the deep were generally unsuccessful; on land, he was unable to resume the siege of Fredickshamn. Both parties were tired of the war; and the peace of Wezela restored them to precisely the same position in which they stood prior to the commencement of hostilities. The treaties of Nystadt and of Abo were confirmed; and the only advantage to compensate the king for the loss of an army and a fleet, was permission to purchase corn in Livonia.

Into the other foreign transactions of Catherine we shall not enter, as enough has been said to show the general tendency of her policy. It was manifestly one of aggression, — sometimes, indeed, suspended for a moment, but suspended only to be renewed with greater chances of success. Such policy had been the fundamental principle of Russian government ever since the czar Peter I. Prior to him, the Russian troops were unknown in Germany; and their appearance created as much surprise as that of the Chinese would have done. But when once admitted into the great family of European nations, — as a member of the great social compact, — the progress of this power was alarmingly rapid. Let us contemplate for a moment the career of Russian aggrandizement, in Europe and Asia, from 1696 to the death of Catherine. 1. Kamschatka, comprising above 4000 square miles. 2. Azof, with its territory, 179 square miles.* 3. Ingria, part of Finland, of Eshonia, and of Livonia, as ceded to the czar Peter by the peace of Nystadt in 1711, comprising near 3000 square miles. 4. By the same czar Persia was constrained to cede Daghestan, Schirvan, Ghilan, Mezenderan, Asterabad, containing about 1500 square miles.* 5. In 1731, the Khirgish Tartars submitted, and placed

* These regions were subsequently restored, but only to be resumed at a more favourable opportunity.

under the sovereignty of Russia a territory comprising above 31,000 square miles. 6. The following year, another body of Tartars submitted, whose country covered an extent of above 15,000 square miles. 7. During the reign of Elizabeth, the only acquisition made was that of Kymmengard, comprising only 42 square miles. Peter III. had no leisure to augment the empire; but Catherine would have delighted the first sovereign of that name. 8. The three partitions of Poland brought her above 8006 square leagues of territory. 9. From Turkey, an extent of above 2500. — These, let us remember, were possessions *incorporated* with the empire; and we do not take into consideration the regions which, like Mingrelia, Georgia, &c., submitted to the czarina, and which, though dependent on her, could not be called parts of her monarchy. Indeed, it has always been the policy of this court to encroach *by degrees* — to assume the *protection* of a territory before the *sovereignty*. This show of moderation has done much to disarm the jealousy of other countries; but it has imposed only on the blind. The retrospect is full of instruction. We may add, so is that which might be furnished by a survey of the same policy, from the death of Catherine II. to the present time.

Of this princess we have only to add, that she died in 1796.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX A.

THE TWO MANIFESTOS OF CATHERINE II.

No. I.—Manifesto of the Empress Catherine II., which was caused to be printed and distributed about the City.

By the grace of God, Catherine II. Empress and Autocratrix of all the Russias, &c.

All true sons of Russia have clearly seen the great danger to which the whole Russian empire has actually been exposed. First, the foundations of our orthodox Greek religion have been shaken, and its traditions exposed to total destruction; so that there was absolutely reason to fear that the faith which has been established in Russia from the earliest times would be entirely changed, and a foreign religion introduced. In the second place, the glory which Russia has acquired at the expense of so much blood, and which was carried to the highest pitch by her victorious arms, has been trampled under foot by the peace lately concluded with its most dangerous enemy. And, lastly, the domestic regulations, which are the basis of the country's welfare, have been entirely overturned.

For these causes, overcome by the imminent perils with which our faithful subjects were threatened, and seeing how sincere and express their desires on this matter were; we, putting our trust in the Almighty and his divine justice, have ascended the sovereign imperial throne of all the Russias, and have received a solemn oath of fidelity from all our loving subjects.

St. Petersburg, June 28. 1762.

No. II.—Manifesto of the Empress Catherine II., giving an Account of her Motives for taking the Reins of Government into her Hands.

By the grace of God, we Catherine II. Empress and Sovereign of all the Russias, make known these presents to all our loving subjects, ecclesiastical, military, and civil.

Our accession to the imperial throne of all the Russias is a manifest proof of this truth, that when sincere hearts endeavour for good, the hand of God directs them. We never had either design or desire to arrive at empire, through the means by which it hath pleased the Almighty, according to the inscrutable views of his providence, to place us upon the throne of Russia, our dear country.

On the death of our most august and dear aunt, the empress Elizabeth Petrovna, of glorious memory, all true patriots (now our most faithful subjects), groaning for the loss of so tender a mother, placed their only consolation in obeying her nephew, whom she had named for her successor, that they might show thereby, in some degree, their acknowledgments to their deceased sovereign. And although they soon found out the weakness of his mind, unfit to rule so vast an empire, they imagined he would have known his own insufficiency. Whereupon they sought our maternal assistance in the affairs of government.

But when absolute power falls to the lot of a monarch who has not sufficient virtue and humanity to place just bounds to it, it degenerates into a fruitful source of the most pernicious evils. This is the sum, in short, of what our native country has suffered. She struggled to be delivered from a sovereign who, being blindly given up to the most dangerous passions, thought of nothing but indulging them, without employing himself in the welfare of the empire committed to his care.

During the time of his being grand-duke, and heir to the throne of Russia, he often caused the most bitter griefs to his most august aunt and sovereign (the truth of which is known to all our court), however he might behave himself outwardly: being kept under her eye by her tenderness, he looked upon this mark of affection as an insupportable yoke. He could not, however, disguise himself so well, but it was perceived by all our faithful subjects that he was possessed of the most audacious ingratitude, which he sometimes showed by personal contempt, sometimes by an avowed hatred to the nation. At length, throwing aside his cloak of hypocrisy, he thought it more fit to let loose the bridle of his passions, than conduct

himself as the heir of so great an empire. In a word, the least traces of honour were not to be perceived in him. What were the consequences of all this?

He was scarcely assured that the death of his aunt and benefactress approached, but he banished her memory entirely from his mind; nay, even before she had sent forth her last groan. He only cast an eye of contempt on the corpse exposed on the bier; and as the ceremony at that time required obliged him to approach it, he did it with his eyes manifestly replete with joy; even intimating his ingratitude by his words. I might add, that the obsequies would have been nothing equal to the dignity of so great and magnanimous a sovereign, if our tender respect to her, cemented by the ties of blood, and the extreme affection between us, had not made us take that duty upon us.

He imagined that it was not to the Supreme Being, but only to chance, that he was indebted for absolute power; and that he had it in his hands, not for the good of his subjects, but solely for his own satisfaction. Adding, therefore, licence to absolute power, he made all the changes in the state which the weakness of his mind could suggest, to the oppression of the people.

Having effaced from his heart even the least traces of the holy orthodox religion (though he had been sufficiently taught the principles thereof), he began first by rooting out this true religion, established so long in Russia, by absenting himself from the house of God, and of prayers, in so open a manner, that some of his subjects, excited by conscience and honesty, seeing his irreverence and contempt of the rites of the church, or rather the railleries he made of them, and scandalising them by his behaviour, dared to make remonstrances to him concerning it; who, for so doing, scarcely escaped the resentment which they might have expected from so capricious a sovereign, whose power was not limited by any human laws. He even intended to destroy the churches, and ordered some to be pulled down. He prohibited those to have chapels in their own houses, whose infirmities hindered them from visiting the house of God. Thus he would have domineered over the faithful, in endeavouring to stifle in them the fear of God, which the holy Scripture teaches us to be the beginning of wisdom.

From this want of zeal towards God, and contempt of his laws, resulted that scorn to the civil and natural laws of his kingdom; for having but an only son, which God had given us, the grand-duke Paul Petrovitch, he would not, when he ascended the throne of Russia, declare him for his successor, that being reserved for his caprice, which tended to the detri-

ment of us and of our son, having an inclination to overthrow the right that his aunt had vested in him, and to make the government of our native country pass into the hands of strangers; in opposition to that maxim of natural right, according to which nobody can transmit to another more than he has received himself.

Although with great grief we saw this intention, we did not believe that we ourselves, and our most dear son, should have been exposed to a persecution so severe: but all persons of probity having observed that the measures that he pursued, by their effects, manifested that they had a natural tendency to our ruin, and that of our dear successor, their generous and pious hearts were justly alarmed: animated with zeal for the interest of their native country, and astonished at our patience under these heavy persecutions, they secretly informed us that our life was in danger, in order to engage us to undertake the burthen of governing so large an empire.

While the whole nation were on the point of testifying their disapprobation of his measures, he nevertheless continued to grieve them the more, by subverting all those excellent arrangements established by Peter the Great, our most dear predecessor, of glorious memory, which that true father of his country accomplished by indefatigable pains and labour through the whole course of a reign of thirty years. The late Peter the Third despised the laws of the empire, and her most respectable tribunals, to such a degree that he could not even bear to hear them mentioned.

After one bloody war, he rashly entered upon another, in which the interests of Russia were no way concerned. He entertained an insuperable aversion to the regiments of guards, which had faithfully served his illustrious ancestors; and made innovations in the army, which, far from exciting in their breasts noble sentiments of valour, only served to discourage troops always ready to spill their best blood in the cause of their country. He changed entirely the face of the army; nay, it even seemed that, by dividing their habits into so many uniforms, and giving them so many different embellishments, for the most part fantastical to the greatest degree, he intended to infuse into them a suspicion that they did not, in effect, belong to one master, and thereby provoke the soldiers, in the heat of battle, to slay one another; although experience demonstrated that uniformity in dress had not a little contributed towards unanimity.

Inconsiderately and incessantly bent on pernicious regulations, he so alienated the hearts of his subjects, that there was scarcely a single person to be found in the nation who did not

openly express his disapprobation, and was even desirous to take away his life; but the laws of God, which command sovereign princes to be respected, being deeply engraved on the hearts of our faithful subjects, restrained them, and engaged them to wait with patience, till the hand of God struck the important blow, and by his fall delivered an oppressed people. Under those circumstances, now laid before the impartial eyes of the public, it was, in fact, impossible but our soul should be troubled with those impending woes which threatened our country, and with that persecution which we, and our most dear son, the heir of the Russian throne, unjustly suffered; being almost entirely excluded from the imperial palace; in such sort, that all who had regard for us, or rather those who had courage enough to speak it (for we have not been able to find that there is one person who is not devoted to our interest), by expressing their sentiments of respect due to us as their empress, endangered their life, or at least their fortune. In fine, the endeavours he made to ruin us, rose to such a pitch, that the broke out in public; and then charging us with being the cause of the murmurs which his own imprudent measures occasioned, his resolution to take away our life openly appeared. But being informed of his purpose by some of our trusty subjects, who were determined to deliver their country, or perish in the attempt, relying on the aid of the Almighty, we cheerfully exposed our person to danger, with all that magnanimity which our native country had a right to expect in return for her affection to us. After having invoked the Most High, and reposed our hope in the divine favour, we resolved also either to sacrifice our life for our country, or save it from bloodshed and calamity. Scarcely had we taken this resolution, by the direction of favouring Heaven, and declared our assent to the deputies of the empire, than the orders of the state crowded to give us assurances of their fidelity and submission.

It now remained for us, in pursuance of the love we bore our faithful subjects, to prevent the consequences which we apprehended, in case of the late emperor's inconsiderately placing his confidence in the imaginary power of the Holstein troops (for whose sake he stayed at Oranienbaum, living in indolence, and abandoning the most pressing exigencies of the state), and there occasioning a carnage, to which our guards and other regiments were ready to expose themselves, for the sake of their native country, for ours, and that of our successor. For these reasons we looked upon it as a necessary duty towards our subjects (to which we were immediately called by the voice of God) to prevent so great a misfortune, by prompt and proper measures. Therefore, placing ourselves at the head of the body-

guards, regiments of artillery, and other troops in and about the imperial residence, we undertook to disconcert an iniquitous design, of which we were as yet only informed in part.

But scarcely were we got out of the city, before we received two letters from the late emperor, one quick on the heels of the other. The first by our vice-chancellor the prince Galitzin, entreating us to allow him to return to Holstein, his native dominions; the other by major-general Michael Ismaïloff, by which he declared, that of his own proper motion he renounced the crown and throne of Russia. In this last he begged of us to allow him to withdraw to Holstein with Elizabeth Vorontzoff and Goudovitch. These two last letters, stuffed with flattering expressions, came to our hands a few hours after he had given orders for putting us to death, as we have been since informed from the very persons who were appointed to execute those unnatural orders.

In the mean time, he had still resources left him, which were to arm against us his Holstein troops, and some small detachments then about his person; he had also in his power several personages of distinction belonging to our court; as he might therefore have compelled us to agree to terms of accommodation still more hurtful to our country (for after having learned what great commotions there were among the people, he had detained them as hostages at his palace of Oranienbaum, and our humanity would never have consented to their destruction, but, to save their lives, we would have risked seeing a part of those dangers reviv d by an accommodation), several persons of high rank about our person requested us to send him a billet in return, proposing to him, if his intentions were such as he declared them to be, that he should instantly send us a voluntary and formal renunciation of the throne, wrote by his own hand, for the public satisfaction. Major-general Ismaïloff carried this proposal, and the writing he now sent back was as follows: —

" During the short space of my absolute reign over the empire of Russia, I became sensible that I was not able to support so great a burthen, and that my abilities were not equal to the task of governing so great an empire, either as a sovereign, or in any other capacity whatever. I also foresaw the great troubles which must have from thence arisen, and have been followed with the total ruin of the empire, and covered me with eternal disgrace. After having, therefore, seriously reflected thereon, I declare, without constraint, and in the most solemn manner, to the Russian empire, and to the whole universe, that I for ever renounce the government of the said empire, never desiring hereafter to reign therein, either as an

absolute sovereign, or under any other form of government; never wishing to aspire thereto, or to use any means, of any sort, for that purpose. As a pledge of which, I swear sincerely before God and all the world, to this present renunciation, written and signed this 29th of June, 1762, O. S.

"PETER."

It is thus, without spilling one drop of blood, that we have ascended the Russian throne, by the assistance of God, and the approving suffrages of our dear country. — Humbly adoring the decrees of Divine Providence, we assure our faithful subjects, that we will not fail, by night and by day, to invoke the Most High to bless our sceptre, and enable us to wield it for the maintenance of our orthodox religion, the security and defence of our dear native country, and the support of justice; as well as to put an end to all miseries, iniquities, and violences, by strengthening and fortifying our heart for the public good. And as we ardently wish to prove effectually how far we merit the reciprocal love of our people, for whose happiness we acknowledge our throne to be appointed, we solemnly promise, on our imperial word, to make such arrangements in the empire, that the government may be endued with an intrinsic force to support itself within limited and proper bounds; and each department of the state provided with wholesome laws and regulations, sufficient to maintain good order therein, at all times, and under all circumstances.

By which means we hope to establish hereafter the empire and our sovereign power, (however they may have been formerly weakened,) in such a manner as to comfort the discouraged hearts of all true patriots. We do not in the least doubt but that our loving subjects will, as well for the salvation of their own souls, as for the good of religion, inviolably observe the oath which they have sworn to us in the presence of the Almighty God; we thereupon assure them of our imperial favour.

Done at Petersburg, July 6. 1762.

APPENDIX B.

LETTER OF THE EMPRESS CATHARINE II. TO M. D'ALEMBERT.

TRANSLATION OF A LETTER FROM THE EMPRESS OF RUSSIA TO M. D'ALEMBERT, AT PARIS, WHOM SHE HAD INVITED INTO RUSSIA TO EDUCATE HER SON.

M. D'ALEMBERT,

I HAVE just received the answer you wrote to Mr. Odart, in which you refuse to transplant yourself to assist in the education of my son. I easily conceive that it costs a philosopher, like you, nothing to despise what the world calls grandeur and honour: these, in your eyes, are very little; and I can readily agree with you that they are so. Considering things in this light, there would be nothing great in the behaviour of queen Christina [of Sweden] which has been so highly extolled; and often censured with more justice. But to be born and called to contribute to the happiness and even the instruction of a whole nation, and yet decline it, is, in my opinion, refusing to do that good which you wish to do. Your philosophy is founded in a love to mankind: permit me then to tell you, that to refuse to serve mankind, whilst it is in your power, is to miss your aim. I know you too well to be a good man, to ascribe your refusal to vanity. I know that the sole motive of it is the love of ease, and leisure to cultivate letters and the friendship of those you esteem. But what is there in this objection? Come, with all your friends; I promise both them and you, every conveniency and advantage that depends upon me; and perhaps you will find more liberty and ease here than in your native country. You refused the invitation of the king of Prussia, notwithstanding your obligations to him; but that prince has no son. I own to you, that I have the education of my son so much at heart, and I think you so necessary to it, that perhaps I press you with too much earnestness. Excuse my indiscretion for the sake of the occasion of it; and be assured that it is my esteem for you that makes me so urgent.

Mosco, CATHARINE.
Nov. 13. 1762.

In this whole letter I have argued only from what I have found in your writings: you would not contradict yourself.

APPENDIX C.

EMIGRATION OF THE KALMUK TARTARS.

THOUGH we have given the substance of the following relation in the text, the reader will not be sorry to see a further account of it here.

Of the Kalmuks or Elœts*, brethren of like race with the Mongoles, several branches are in subjection to the Russian empire. Their original abode, if we may use such an expression in speaking of nomadic hordes, is the Kalmuckia: lying westward toward the proper Mongolia, and in the north and east of the lesser Bukharia. At the latter end of the last century, two tribes of them, the Torgot and Derbet, drew up in the steppe on the Volga above Astrakhan. Till very modern times, they remained however only as protected neighbours, and were tolerably independent on the government. But in 1757 the vice-khan Dondudidaschi, contrary to the established custom of all the khans to receive their appointment from the dalailama in Tibet, thought fit, though they are of the lama religion, to apply to Russia for the nomination of his son as his successor. At Petersburg the request was granted with great satisfaction, which perhaps would not have been the case on an application to Tibet: the father was constituted actual khan; and the son, only 13 years old, without hesitation declared successor, with an allowance of 500 rubles *per annum*, and installed with the usual solemnities. On the death of the father in 1761, Russia thought she had a right to meddle in the affairs of the young sovereign: instead of the accustomed council of eight saissans, it was made to consist of a larger number, whom the court easily retained by paying each of the members a salary of 100 rubles. The friendly protection was thus (as has happened in various other cases) changed into an actual sovereignty. In consequence of fresh regulations, the khan lost his former unlimited authority, and became nothing more than the president of his council; nor had he any longer the right to dismiss this council; he could only complain to the imperial college of Russia; and he was taught to esteem it advantage enough that the sovereign tribunal stood open to his appeal. In all other respects these Kalmuks retained their religion and their manners: they roamed about the steppe, had an aversion to permanent dwellings, and lived on the produce of their flocks and herds. These consisted in sheep, camels, and principally in horses; the whole nation was armed

* Improperly, Eleuts.

and mounted; and their favourite drink, like that of all these Tartar tribes, was a spirituous extract of mares' milk, called in their language koumish.* The pasture of these horses requires this roving life; as a father of a family may possess from 100 to 1000, and some of them even 4000 heads. Many of them were in good circumstances, and very respectable people; kind, generous, and hospitable: this last quality they possess in an eminent degree, and show it to every one who peaceably enters their tents. But they are quite the reverse to such as attack them as foes, especially to nations whom they acknowledge not as brothers. Accordingly, Russia employed them in hosts in the Prussian war; and Germany still recollects with horror the Asiatic savages that were let loose upon her without regard to morals and the rights of humanity. In the Turkish war they likewise fought for Russia in the district of the Kuban. Such was the situation of them till the year 1770.

In the mean time great heart-burnings had long subsisted among the most considerable of them on account of the innovations introduced by the Russians. The circumscription of their primitive liberty, their reducing their khan to a state of dependence, the intermeddling of a foreign nation in their constitution and laws, which begot dissensions and disobedience in the horde, the injuries (real or imaginary) which some princes had received from Russian officers: all this awakened an irresistible hankering after their former condition; and as it was not to be hoped for where they were, no choice was left, but they must seek it in their ancient plains, where their ancestors knew of no Europeans. Just at this time the governor of Astrakhan appointed a lieutenant named Kischenskoï, as inspector of these peaceful Kalmuks. Kischenskoï, a man of insatiable rapacity, by insensible degrees got possession of a

* The ordinary drink, thus called, is prepared in the following manner: —Taking a given quantity of mare's milk of one day, they add to it a sixth part of water, an eighth part of the sourest cow's milk that can be procured, but at any time afterwards a smaller portion of old koumish will better answer the purpose of acidulating; they then cover the vessel with a thick cloth, and set it in a place moderately warm; here they leave it to rest for four and twenty hours, at the end of which period, the milk will have got sour, and a thick scum will be formed on the surface. They now beat it with a stick resembling at the lower end a churnstaff, till the fore-mentioned scum be entirely blended with the subjacent fluid; which done, it is set to remain twenty-four hours in a tall vessel shaped like a churn. The beating is now repeated till the liquor appears to be thoroughly homogeneous, and in this state it is called kumiss, the proper taste whereof is an agreeable mixture of sweet and acid. Whenever it is wanted for use, it is first shaken. Being duly prepared in tight vessels, and put in a cold place, it will keep three months and upwards without detriment to its quality.—It serves both for meat and drink; is an excellent stomachic, and a remedy for disorders of the nervous system, of the breast, &c. The Tartars also make a distillation of this fermented milk, by which process they obtain a spirituous liquor, supplying to them the place of brandy.

great part part of their cattle, and sold them to his own benefit. His exactions soon procured him an immense fortune. But his avarice, far from diminishing, seemed rather to increase with the means of its gratification.

One of their princes, a venerable old man, who had shed his blood in the service of Russia, in recompense for which the empress had given him her miniature portrait set round with brilliants, and which he wore suspended to his neck, was one day applied to by Kischenskoï for some presents in addition to those which he had already given him. The old man, irritated at his insolence, could not refrain from breaking out into reproaches on his injustice and the vexations he employed to the ruin of the unhappy Kalmuks. Kischenskoï, offended at the truth of these repreaches, had the temerity to strike him on the face, and having at the same time ordered one of the saissans, the minister of the khan who interposed in his behalf, to be seized by his soldiers, ordered him the punishment of the battogues.*

The Kalmuks had, if not patiently, at least quietly, suffered the rapacity and peculations of the Russian officer; but they could not endure the insult that had been put upon this venerable old man, who stood in great respect among them. The priests and the elders of the horde having held a consultation, resolved to abandon the territory of the Russian empire, and retire to the foot of the mountains of Tibet, the country of their progenitors. The common people were easily persuaded; especially as they were told that the Russian regulations were introduced for no other purpose than to compel them to the three things which they most abhorred: Christianity, agriculture, and the raising recruits. A little priestcraft was also had recourse to on this occasion. The noyons or princes set up a lama, whom they raised in a moment to be the immortal archpriest or dalailama, in the following manner: — It was propagated abroad, that a famous Kalmuk priest, who had died three years before, had now appeared again alive, and had issued a proclamation to the people, that he was risen from the dead at Tibet, in the residence of the great dalailama; of all which a written testimony was brought from the immortal high priest; in which it was declared, that being now become a being of a superior order, he foreknew the fates and fortunes

* Battogues — a sort of punishment used in Russia for inferior offences. The sufferer is laid on his face upon the ground, stripped to his waist, and the arms and legs extended. Two men, one of whom sits on his neck, and the other on his legs, beat him alternately on the back with the battogues, which are rods of the thickness of the little finger. Persons having any authority over others may inflict this punishment upon them without any form of trial or legal process. Nobles and peasants are equally liable to it, when it is ordered by superiors.

of the nation, and required them, in the name of their gods, to return, and again take possession of their ancient territory. This happened towards the close of the year 1770, just when they thought it the proper moment for the grand rupture; otherwise they would have suffered the lama to have slept quietly in his grave for a longer or a shorter time.

It was an unpardonable neglect in the commanding officer in those parts not to put a stop to the proceedings of the horde, so as to prevent the emigration, as their intention was publicly known in those parts. He even suffered himself to be duped by the Kalmuks, to whom, on their forging some pretext of apprehension from the Kirguises, their neighbours, he gave two pieces of cannon, with ammunition and some engineers. Accordingly, in the autumn, they began their march: a prodigious troop, with wives, children, and servants, having their droves, horses, flocks, goods, huts, and tents. The captain under the command of the khan was forced to migrate with them at the head of his kozaks. The march was conducted regularly enough, in three troops, who constantly kept in sight; the flanks of each were particularly covered, and besides this they had a van and a rear guard. At the beginning they plundered the fisheries and the trading houses on the borders of the Volga and the Caspian. But, on their progress into the southern Siberia, they came upon the kozaks of the Yaïk, who stopped and pursued the flying horde, cut thousands of them to pieces, and forced thousands to return. In the spring, 1771, they were attacked by the Kirguises, their inveterate enemies, and, after a bloody engagement, took many of them prisoners. In the summer they proceeded through the ancient Mongolia to the Chinese borders; where an army of the Mandshu * received them, and afforded them protection.

The secret of their flight was so well kept, that it was not known to the Russians till two days after their departure. Three regiments were sent in pursuit of them to no purpose. The Kalmuks were more in haste than they; and, besides, they were two days before them. These regiments wandered a long time in the deserts, and a considerable part of the soldiers perished.

When the news of the emigration was brought to St. Petersburg, a corps of troops were ordered by the court to go in quest of them. But, if the former pursuits were too late, it was not likely that these should come up with them: the lamentable particulars of this expedition may be read in captain Rytschkoff's journal; where it may be seen what difficulties and hardships these indefatigable pursuers of the fugitive horde

* The present emperor of China.

encountered, in their devious marches on this unavailing expedition, and what variety of distresses they suffered in the dreary inhospitable regions and waterless deserts through which they passed. At length nothing farther was to be done but to make application by a written memorial to China, to demand the restitution of the runaways. But the supreme tribunal of Pekin answered the rescript of the Russian senate abruptly, in a scornful and derisory manner, and concluded by saying, that "their sovereign was not a prince so unjust as to deliver up his subjects to foreigners, nor so cruel a father as to drive away children who returned to the bosom of their family. That he had no intimation of the design of the Kalmuks till the moment of their arrival; and that then without delay he caused to be restored to them the habitations that had belonged to them from time immemorial. That, in short, the empress had no reason to complain of the Kalmuks, but certainly of the officer who had dared to lift his hand against a servant of the khans, and to order their ministers to undergo the battogues." The letter was thus subscribed: — "In the 36th year, the 7th month, and the 13th day of the reign of Kien-Long." On various occasions Catharine frequently received from these her neighbours answers in a style which must have struck her the more sensibly, as she was accustomed to hear from all the other monarchs in the world a very different language. On her applying for a fresh treaty for the renewal of the commerce with China by the caravans, which for several years had been interrupted, on account of some differences that had arisen between the subjects of the two potentates, the answer given to her envoy was: — "Let your mistress learn to keep old treaties; and then it will be time enough to apply for new ones." Accordingly we see, from her private communications*, how sensible she was upon this subject; and she could scarcely endure to hear any praise, even jestingly, bestowed on the emperor of China, who was otherwise known as an author and poet.

Concerning the number of persons lost to Russia by this emigration, accounts do not agree. Some state it at 130,000 families; which is certainly exaggerated. More accurate statements say, that the horde in general consisted of not much above 70,000 tents, or hearths, of families. Those who voluntarily returned, (for doubtless many of them, on the fatiguing and painful expedition over the deserts, panted after the more quiet abode on the Volga, and turned back,) and those who were brought in by the kozaks, are reckoned together at 12,342 tents. Those that escaped, therefore, estimating them

* For example, in her correspondence with Voltaire.

at the highest, were 60,000 hearths. But how great the number of the individuals that died upon the road, and of those who were carried into captivity by the Kirguises, can never be known.

A council of war was held to examine into the conduct of lieutenant-colonel Kischenskoï, and to pronounce upon it. But the business was conducted with negligence and every possible delay. Kischenskoï employed a part of the fruit of his rapine in procuring himself friends at court, or in corrupting his judges: and to the great scandal of the majority of the Russians, this man, who had occasioned the loss of such a number of subjects to the country, was recompensed by the title of colonel.

APPENDIX D.

THE PRINCESS TARRAKANOFF.

It has already been mentioned that the empress Elizabeth had three children by her clandestine marriage with the grand-veneur Alexey Gregorievitch Razumoffsky. The youngest of these children was a girl, brought up under the name of princess Tarrakanoff. Prince Radzivil, informed of this secret, and irritated at Catharine's trampling under foot the rights of the Poles, conceived that the daughter of Elizabeth would furnish him with a signal means of revenge. He thought that it would not be in vain if he opposed to the sovereign, whose armies were spreading desolation over his unhappy country, a rival whose mother's name should render dear to the Russians. Perhaps his ambition might suggest to him yet more lofty hopes. Perhaps he might flatter himself with being one day enabled to mount the throne on which he intended to place the young Tarrakanoff. However this be, he gained over the persons to whom the education of this princess was committed, carried her off, and conveyed her to Rome.*

Catharine, having intelligence of this transaction, took immediate steps to frustrate the designs of prince Radzivil. Taking advantage of the circumstance of his being the chief of the confederacy of the malecontents, she caused all his estates to be seized, and reduced him to the necessity of living on the pro-

* In 1767 mademoiselle de Tarrakanoff was about twelve years of age.

duce of the diamonds and the other valuable effects he had carried with him to Italy. These supplies were soon exhausted. Radzivil set out in order to pick up what intelligence he could concerning affairs in Poland, leaving the young Tarrakanoff at Rome, under the care of a single gouvernante, and in circumstances extremely confined. Scarcely had he reached his own country, when an offer was made to restore him his possessions, on condition that he would take his young ward to Russia. He refused to submit to so disgraceful a proposal; but he had the weakness to promise that he would give himself no farther concern about the daughter of Elizabeth. This was the price of his pardon.

Alexey Orloff, charged with the execution of the will of the empress, seized the first moment on his arrival at Leghorn, of laying a snare for the princess Tarrakanoff. One * of those intriguers who are so common in Italy, repaired immediately to Rome; and, after having discovered the lodgings of the young Russian, he introduced himself to her in a military dress and under the name of an officer. He told her that he had been brought thither by the sole desire of paying homage to a princess whose fate and fortunes were highly interesting to all her countrymen. He seemed very much affected at the state of destitution in which he found her. He offered her some assistance, which necessity forced her to accept; and the traitor soon appeared to this unfortunate lady, as well as to the woman that waited on her, in the light of a saviour whom Heaven had sent to her deliverance.

When he thought he had sufficiently gained their confidence, he declared that he was commissioned by count Alexius Orloff to offer to the daughter of Elizabeth the throne that had been filled by her mother. He said that the Russians were discontented with Catharine; that Orloff especially could never forgive her for her ingratitude and her tyranny; and that, if the young princess would accept of the services of that general, and recompense him by the grant of her hand, it would not be long ere she saw the breaking out of that revolution which he had prepared.

Proposals so brilliant ought naturally to have opened the eyes of the princess Tarrakanoff, and shown her the treachery of him that made them. But her inexperience and her candour permitted her not to suspect any guile. Besides, the language of the emissary of Alexius Orloff seemed analogous

* It was a Neapolitan, named Ribas. He afterwards came to Russia, where he married mademoiselle Anastasia, reputed daughter of M. de Betskoi, and has since been made knight of Malta, and promoted to the rank of vice-admiral of the Black Sea.

with the notions she had imbibed from prince Radzivil. She imagined herself destined to the throne; and all the airy dreams that any way related to that opinion could not but encourage the deceit. She accordingly gave herself up to these flattering hopes, and with a grateful heart concurred in the designs of him who addressed her only to her destruction.

Some time after this, Alexius Orloff came to Rome. His emissary had already announced him. He was received as a benefactor. However, some persons to whom the princess and her gouvernante communicated the good fortune that was promised them, advised them to be on their guard against the designs of a man whose character for wickedness had been long established, and who doubtless had too much reason to remain faithful to the empress to think of conspiring against her. Far from profiting by this good counsel, the princess was so imprudently frank as to speak of it to Alexius Orloff, who with great ease delivered his justification, and thenceforth threw a deeper shade of dissimulation and address into his speeches and behaviour. Not satisfied with fanning the ambition of the young Russian, he put on the semblance of a passion for her, and succeeded so far as to inspire her with a true one. So soon as he was assured of it, he conjured her to enter into a union with him by the most sacred ties. She unhappily consented; and it was even with joy that the poor unfortunate lady promised to solemnise a marriage which must consummate her ruin. She thought that the title of spouse of count Alexius Orloff would shelter her invincibly from those treacheries which she was taught to apprehend. She entertained not the least suspicion that a man could make religion and the most sacred titles subservient to the destruction of an innocent victim. But, alas! was any religion, was any title sacred to the barbarian into whose snares she had fallen? He who could strangle the unfortunate Peter III. could he dread to dishonour the daughter of Elizabeth?*

Feigning a desire that the marriage ceremony should be performed according to the ritual of the Greek church, he suborned subaltern villains to disguise themselves as priests and lawyers. Thus profanation was combined with imposture against the unprotected and too confident Tarrakanoff.

When Alexius Orloff was become the husband or rather the ravisher of this unhappy princess, he represented to her that their stay at Rome exposed her to too close observation, and that it would be advisable for her to go to some other

* The fate of the young Tarrakanoff may be compared to that of the daughter of Sejanus: ". . . . a carnifice laqueum juxta, compressam . . . ." —*Tacit. Ann.* lib. v.

city of Italy, to wait for the breaking out of the conspiracy that was to call her to the throne. Believing this advice to be dictated by love and prudence, she answered, that she would follow him wherever he chose to conduct her. He brought her immediately to Pisa, where he had previously hired a magnificent palace. There he continued to treat her with marks of tenderness and respect. But he permitted none to come near her except persons who were entirely at his devotion; and when she went to the play or to the public promenades, he accompanied her always himself.

The division of the Russian squadron under the command of admiral Greig had just entered the port of Leghorn. On relating this news to the princess, Alexius Orloff told her that his presence was necessary at Leghorn for the purpose of giving some orders, and offered to take her with him. To this she the more readily consented, as she had heard much talk of the beauty of the port of Leghorn, and the magnificence of the Russian ships. Imprudent lady! the nearer she approached the catastrophe of the plot, the more she trusted to the tenderness and the sincerity of her faithless betrayer.

She departed from Pisa with her customary attendance. On arriving at Leghorn, she landed at the house of the English consul, who had prepared for her a suitable apartment, and who received her with marks of the profoundest respect. Several ladies were early in making their visits, and sedulously attended her on all occasions. She saw herself presently surrounded by a numerous court, eager to be beforehand with all her desires, and seeming to make it their only study incessantly to procure her some new entertainment. Whenever she went out, the people ran in her way. At the theatre all eyes were directed to her box. All circumstances conspired to lull her into a fatal security. All tended to dispel the idea of any danger at hand.

The young Tarrakanoff was so far from suspecting her unfortunate situation, that, after having passed several days in a round of amusements and dissipation, she asked of herself to be shown the Russian fleet. The idea was applauded. The necessary orders were immediately given; and the next day, on rising from table, every thing was ready at the water-side for receiving the princess. On her coming down, she was handed into a boat with magnificent awnings. The consul, and several ladies, seated themselves with her. A second boat conveyed vice-admiral Greig and count Alexius Orloff; and a third, filled with Russian and English officers, closed the procession. The boats put off from shore in sight of an immense multitude of people, and were received by the fleet, with a

band of music, salutes of artillery, and repeated huzzas. As the princess came alongside the ship of which she was to go on board, a splendid chair was let down from the yard, in which being seated, she was hoisted upon deck; and it was observed to her, that these were particular honours paid to her rank.

But no sooner was she on board than she was handcuffed. In vain she implored for pity of the cruel betrayer, whom she still called her husband. In vain she threw herself at his feet, and watered them with her tears. No answer was even vouchsafed to her lamentations. She was carried down into the hold; and the next day the vessel set sail for Russia.

On arriving at Petersburg, the young victim was shut up in the fortress; and what became of her afterwards was never known.*

In the mean time, the inhabitants of Leghorn, who had seen the princess embark, heard shortly after, with horror, that instead of a grand entertainment, which she was led to expect, on board the fleet, she was put into irons. The grand-duke of Tuscany, whose territory was thus so shamefully insulted, wrote immediately to Vienna and to Petersburg to complain of the outrage. But Alexius Orloff insolently braved both the complaints of Leopold and the public indignation.

* It was affirmed by some, that the waters of the Neva, six years afterwards, put an end to her misfortunes, by drowning her in the prison, in the inundation of 1777. On the 10th of September of that year, a wind at S.S W. raised the waters of the gulph of Finland towards the Neva, with a violence so extraordinary that it swelled that river to the height of ten feet above its usual level, and drove many vessels on shore. The author of the interesting "Mémoires secrets sur l'Italie," who some time since printed a part of these particulars, surmises that the young Tarrakanoff fell in prison by the hands of the executioner. The truth is, the grounds are but very slight for rendering credible either the one or the other account.

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